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ANDREW STUART.

A NOVEL.

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.



*Wrote the book from her
and the author's*
ANDREW STUART,

OR THE
NORTHERN WANDERER.

A NOVEL.

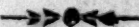
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MARY ANN HANWAY,
AUTHOR OF ELLINOR, OR THE WORLD AS IT IS.

—●●●●●—
“ 'Tis SATIRE gives the strongest light to sense,
“ To thought compression, vigour to the soul,
“ To language bounds, to fancy due controul,
“ To Truth the splendour of her awful face,
“ To learning dignity, to virtue grace,
“ To conscience stings beneath the cap or crown,
“ To Vice that terror she will feel and own.”

Pursuits of Literature.



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ANDREW S. J. B. A. N. T.

NORTH H. W. A. D. R. E. R.



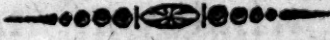
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

ANDREW S. J. B. A. N. T.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1880

DEDICATION.



TO

MAJOR JOHN SCOT WARING.

SIR,

I ADDRESSED to a generous
Public the first work to which I
had the temerity to prefix my
A name ;

name; its reception of Ellinor was far beyond my most sanguine expectations, being lenient to her faults, and liberally approving whatever might be deemed meritorious: this was so truly flattering to my *amour propre*, that it acted as a stimulative to future exertions, and encouraged me to continue my literary pursuits.

Determined to seek for my hero the honour of individual protection,

protection, who could I so properly have selected to patronise my Northern Wanderer, as him whose unwearied exertions, undeviating attentions, ardent zeal, and steady adherence to the cause of an injured, persecuted friend, are above all praise? When he laboured under the most cruel oppression, condemned to hear charges brought against him from which his nature revolted,

revolted, obliged for years to endure the taunts of vindictive malice, the

“Proud man’s contumely, and the law’s delay ;”

in this trying situation you remained firm to his interest ; unmoved by existing circumstances, unawed by power, pertinaciously adhering to his side, with a constancy as *rare* as it was meritorious ; till Justice ultimately prevailed, conquered prejudice,

prejudice, and gave him a proud triumph over his enemies, by an honourable acquittal ! This conduct will form your highest eulogium in the opinion of those who are enabled, from the sensations of their own hearts, to appreciate the inestimable blessing of a real friend !

As a small tribute of my estimation of such a character, I beg leave to dedicate

ANDREW

DEDICATION.

ANDREW STUART to your amusement.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

MARY ANN HANWAY.

MANCHESTER STREET,
MANCHESTER-SQUARE.

ANDREW STUART.

CHAP. I.

ANDREW STUART was born of poor and honest parents, in a cottage formed (to borrow the language of Dr. Johnson) of an adaptation of loose stones, situated at the foot of Ben Lomond, which rises three hundred fathom high, rearing its lofty head above those clouds that roll majestically far beneath its summit, presenting to the eye of the traveller an interesting, picturesque, and sublime object, when viewed from Loch Lomond, over whose glassy

VOL. I

B

surface

surface are scattered in regular confusion those fairy islands which appear to arise from the lake by the power of enchantment, in whose undulating waves Andrew often dipped his oaten cake, slaking his thirst with the pure beverage, as he rested on its beautiful banks, and watched the gambols of the small flock it was his daily task to follow, while they cropped the soft grass that clothed the mountain.

Andrew's person, at nine years of age, was what in a more southern clime would be termed athletic. His limbs were strengthened by being exposed to the warring elements in all seasons, and his sinews braced by the bleak North East, as it blew through the chasms of his father's *wee housee* by the *bourne-side*, while his bronzed cheek glowed with rude health, derived from air, exercise, and temperance. Straight, tall, and muscular, he appeared much older than he was.

He

He derived his origin from the clan of Stuart; his grandfather had been one of the misguided few that in 1745 left his family and paternal acres, to join the standard, and follow the desperate fortunes of the last hope of that ill-fated House, whose name he had the honour to bear. That he did so was his highest gratification, and proudest boast, amidst the squalid wretchedness and biting poverty which he had entailed on his descendants, by his strong attachment to the remnant of a once illustrious race.

Alexander Stuart's comfortable dwelling being situated within the focus of the Royal Army, on his being denounced as a traitor, it had been given up to the plunder of the soldiery, and his wife and children driven forth with opprobrium, to seek another habitation: himself being proscribed, dared not appear; but hunted down by his pursuers, sought a wretched shelter in the caves and fastnesses

fastnesses of the uncultivated Highlands; till stern Justice, satiated with the blood that had flowed on her altars, from the victims immolated at her shrine, the Royal mercy was extended to the remaining rebels, who should deliver themselves up, and swear fealty to their liege Sovereign.

The grandfather of our hero availed himself of this proclamation, to return to his sorrowing relatives. He found them scattered in various directions: his wife had died through grief; his eldest son, Charles, stung by the reproaches his father's disloyalty had drawn upon his children, was supposed to have emigrated to America; his second had married a young woman to whom he had been long attached, had retired, and constructed for himself a hut at the foot of Ben Lomond, where, like Cain, he earned his frugal morsel by the sweat of his brow.

Rejoiced to be once more held in the embraces of a father, though his mistaken zeal had reduced his family to extreme wretchedness, he received him with the most dutiful affection ; offering him an asylum, and promising to labour for his support ; his parent being prevented from assisting himself in consequence of a wound he had received in battle, that, from his desultory life since, had never been properly healed.

Such is the force of habits, and prejudices long indulged, that old Stuart still retained a portion of the rebellious leaven, and would talk in raptures of the “ *gude ould cause*, and the *bra lad Charley*,” while tears filled the furrows that time had made in his weather-beaten countenance. Andrew listened with wonder and delight, while his grandfather talked to his family of the days that were passed, as they crouched around their peat fire. He enumerated his hair-breadth scapes by land and water,

and exultingly displayed the wound which had left him for dead on the field, that he gloried in having received when warding off a blow aimed at the head of the ill-fated exile by a trooper at Culloden Moor. Then would he unhang his rusty broadsword, flourishing it over the heads of his trembling auditors, "fight all his battles o'er again, and thrice he slew the slain."

These warlike discourses, the constant theme of the grandfather, sank deep in the breast of Andrew, and aroused the active principle of curiosity; while embryo courage warmed his young blood, and flushed his cheek with crimson: he panted to see that world, those great cities, and valiant heroes, with which he pictured them to be inhabited. Andrew thought if he could ascend Ben Lomond, which alone bounded his view, he should at least catch a glimpse of objects that absorbed all his ideas, employed his daily thoughts, his nightly dreams.

dreams. Determined to steal a march, he made no confidants;—early one morning in June, having filled his pockets with oaten cakes, and driven his fleecy charge on the contrary side from his paternal roof, he began his journey.

Andrew, eager to attain his purpose, bounded on, like feathered Mercury,

“ Up the high rise with panting haste he pass’d,
“ And gained the long laborious steep at last;
“ Where his wondering sight at once survey’d,
“ Woods, lakes, and mountains, valleys, rocks,
 and sea,
“ Huge hills, that heaped in crowded order, stand,
“ Stretched o’er the western and the northern
 land.”

All this our young traveller viewed with amazement, now convinced there were both land and water beyond the confines of the Loch. Though mortified he could espy neither the towns nor people, that he had flattered himself with beholding, he sighed to emigrate from his native

home, and, while resting on the top of the mountain, pondered over the means to escape, and reach that world of pleasure, his active fancy portrayed. In this new region he respired more freely, he seemed suspended in mid air; all was so new and delightful, he thought not of the flitting hours. The sun was fast sinking in the West before he commenced his descent, and ere he had accomplished a third part of his journey, he found himself in total darkness; he kept walking on, but stumbled at every step. The tears poured down his face in torrents; the apprehension of his father's anger, who was ever very severe if the slightest of his orders were neglected, now first struck his affrighted imagination: added to this, the superstitious dread of ghosts, which early habit instils into the breasts of the Scotch, the solemn stillness of the night aiding the idea, entirely overpowered the faculties of our little wanderer.

wanderer. He threw himself down upon his face, praying and sobbing alternately, till exhausted nature buried all his ambitious hopes and present cares in a profound slumber.

Andrew did not awake till the first streaks of ruddy morn appeared in the East: he hardly recollected where he was, or how he came there; the adventures of the past day presented themselves as a dream, but when memory, faithful to its trust, convinced him of the reality, fear for the consequences of his truant journey, made him tremble. Slowly and sorrowfully he bent his steps towards home, though dreading to behold his father, after having been absent all night. He had nearly gained the bottom of Ben Lomond, when he met his elder brother, who informed him that his parents, alarmed when evening came at his not returning, had sought him every where, and supposing that he had fallen into the water, and was

B 5

drowned,

drowned, were inconsolable. The sheep had wandered where they liked; one of the best, the bell-wether of the flock, had been taken out of the Loch dead. Enraged at this, their father had vowed if Andrew came back, and his carelessness had occasioned this terrible loss, he would flog him severely. He had come to seek him, that he might know what he had to expect. This intelligence completed the grief of Andrew, and determined him in the resolution of returning to his parents no more.

He now recounted to his brother the cause of his absence, and his fixed purpose not to go back to meet the anger of his father, and the threatened punishment; but to seek his fortune in another country. By tears and caresses he attempted to persuade Sandy to aid his escape, threatening to destroy himself if he did not consent. By the united efforts of love and fear, he wrung
from

from him a reluctant promise of assistance. It was agreed by these young plotters that Andrew should conceal himself till night; his brother should then come to him, and taking their father's boat, they should cross the Loch: this scheme was successfully executed. Before they parted, the young adventurer received an assurance from Sandy that he would not betray his flight. His heart, naturally good and kind, panted to embrace his mother, but the more powerful fear of his father's denounced vengeance, kept him steady to his purpose.

Sandy, who had filled a little wallet with what provisions he could get together unsuspected, to which he added a couple of shirts, now tied it across the shoulders of the little wanderer; then giving him a shilling that had been presented to him by a gentleman for catching his horse, it being the amount of all his worldly wealth, he

B 6

embraced,

embraced his brother with a flood of tears, desiring that when he found the world he was going to seek, and became a great General, he would not forget him and his poor relations in the *wee housee* by the *bourne-side*. This being most faithfully promised by Andrew, with a heavy heart he pursued his journey.

Having often heard his father talk of Glasgow, he resolved to inquire his way to that city, begging for food at the cottages he passed on the road ;—as the hospitality of the Scotch peasantry is as proverbial as their poverty, they refused not to share their *bannocks* with the *wee cheeld*, or to give him a truss of clean straw at night. Happily for young Stuart, inured to sleep hard, and fare coarsely, his health did not suffer from his travels ; his spirits returned, and alternately whistling and singing, he pursued his walk. His little heart throbbed with buoyant hope, flattering himself he was now about to see that world

world which was to make him great, rich, and happy.

Glasgow at length appeared in view. With a palpitating heart Andrew entered;—lost in wonder, he gazed with delight at the fine houses, elegant equipages, handsome ladies, and gay shops, that met his astonished eyes; but what created pleasure the most congenial to the mind of our young *émigré*, were the ships passing and repassing on the river, as he beheld the sun-beams glittering on their white sails, while they fluttered with the gale. To see the world in one of them was the ultimatum of his wishes; how that was to be effected must be a future consideration!

He feasted only the sense of sight, and listened not to the calls of hunger, till her demands became peremptory. Andrew was now fated to experience it was not so easy to satisfy her claims in a large, populous, and commercial city,
as

as at the charitable hut of the humble cottager, who cheerfully shares his hard-earned pittance with the offspring of want, the shivering mendicant; his own necessities teach him to feel the sufferings of his fellow-man. Not so the lordly owner of the splendid mansion, as he rolls through the massy gates in his well-appointed equipage; he hears not the still small voice of the humble suppliant, to be fed with the crumbs that fall from his luxurious board.

In a large and voluptuous metropolis, the cries of individual distress are drowned in the whirl of dissipation—lost in the vortex of vanity, the frivolity of fashion, the ostentatious display of wealth, the ambitious parade of power, and the gratification of passion. The poor traveller to see the world, experienced this on his first outset; while with tears, extorted by hunger, he begged a *wee bit of bannock*,
to

to keep a wretched *cheeld* from starving. He was driven from the doors of the great and opulent, by that high-pampered set of sauey lazy drones, that hang on the rails of castellated dwellings, commenting on, and insulting, by impertinent remarks, the men, and shocking, by indecent ribaldry, the women, who are condemned to pass in their walks those protected nuisances, those appendages to glut the vanity of the rich, and outrage the feelings of the poor.

The starving trembler, driven by the arrogant lacquey with contumelious insult from the steps of the man of consequence, essayed to move compassion in the rigid breast of the trader:—here again he failed, and was threatened with the house of correction, as an idle vagabond who wished to feed on the industrious; he was bid to work, or starve. The blood of the clan of Stuart now but faintly ebbed through his veins,

as

as he turned from the churlish man of business ; it flew to his face, while he told him he begged for bread to enable him to labour, not to support an idle existence.

Andrew now sighed for home, and began to think this world he so much wished to see, must be a bad one. Conscience whispered that his present suffering was a just punishment for his late undutiful behaviour to his parents ;—to them he dared not return ; he bent his solitary steps once more to the side of the river. Sitting down upon an anchor, he watched the declining sun, as he poured out his little heart in prayer to his Maker, accompanied by floods of penitential tears.

Thus situated, he had been some time observed by an honest Tar, who was watching one of the vessels that was unlading her cargo ; he now hailed him with—

“ Halloo !

“Halloo ! what chëer, young swabber? What has set your eye-pumps a going at such a confounded rate?”

“ I *dinna* ken your meaning, *Sare*.”

“ What, Sawney, you don’t understand me? I say what brought you to anchor here, and makes you swab your day-lights at that there rate? Mayhap your bread basket be empty? If so, say the word, and you shall mess with me, my bonny fellow ; it shall never be said Tom Reefem would not put himself on short allowance, to enable a fellow-creature to weather the storms of adversity.”

Andrew made a shift to understand enough of this address, to know it meant kindness and goodwill. To this new-acquired friend he recounted his artless tale ; his intention of travelling to see the world, the rebuffs he had already encountered ; that in yon *muckle* gay place no person would give him a bit of bread ; and, finally, he was sick with
hunger,

hunger, not having broke his fast for the day; that he had a piece of *siller* which his brother Sandy gave him, but he would starve and die before he would part with that. He now took out the shilling, the gift of his brother, which having kissed, and washed with his tears, he returned it to his bosom.

Tom, after having wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his tarpawlin jacket, exclaimed—

“ D——n seize those fair weather chaps, those land sharks, that could see a poor little cock-boat sinking, and not lend a hand to save her! When they are running their vessel for a trip to the other country, may Tom Reefem be set at the helm, and if I don't give a good account of them, sink me! While I am setting my jawing tacks a going, like a land lubber for my pains, your grinders, poor little Sawney, are yawing to splice a piece of beef and biscuit.”

He

He now whipped up Andrew under his arm, and presently seated him on the deck of the vessel.

“ There, my hearty, bring yourself to an anchor, never flinch ! I’ll soon return with stowage for your hold ; your little shallop shan’t upset for want of ballast.”

He disappeared, to the no small astonishment of his guest, who, thinking he saw him sink through the floor, began to pray most fervently, firmly believing he had seen the *Deel*, and to thank the *gude God* that he had not permitted the evil spirit to carry him away. His devotions were scarce finished, when he saw him ascend with a flannel night-cap on his head, which added to his dismay, and he screamed aloud.

“ Halloo, my little one, what are you afeard of ? You’ll make but a bad traveller if you are so soon scared.”

Tom

Tom now put into his hand some biscuit and beef, which he accompanied with a hearty slap on the shoulder.

“Come, my younker, feed—you are as welcome to it as my own father: don’t spare it—you shall have more if you can stow it away; a British Tar works hard for his meat, therefore ought to know its value; for all that, he will always share with a brother in distress.”

Andrew, whose mind was strongly impressed with the fear of Tom’s being a *ghaist*, knew not how to accept the proffered bounty. His stomach yearned toward it, and the sensation of hunger overpowered that of terror; he fell to most voraciously, and devoured his supper with the same goodwill it had been given by Tom; who perceiving him swallow it so rapidly, cried—

“Avast heaving, my little one, or you’ll choke your pumps if you don’t swab your decks. Here, take a swig of the swipes, and then we’ll have a tiff
of

of grog to drink sweethearts and wives, for a sailor never forgets that on a Saturday night."

This conversation was high Dutch to Andrew; not so the hearty supper he had made, which having raised his spirits, he felt gratitude in its genuine purity for the donor, whom he no longer believed to be an evil spirit; and expressed it by flinging his arms round the neck of his preserver, watering his sun-burnt face with tears, while, in the genuine language of nature, he poured forth the effusions of his susceptible heart in thanks for his kindness.

"Come, come, my good fellow, you are welcome as the flowers in May, but must get upon another tack, or d'ye see I shall turn sniveller, and run upon the quicksands of folly; for I should not like, when my messmates come aboard again, for them to see Tom Reefem, who has boxed the compass for forty years, man and boy, and weathered

weathered so many rough days and hard gales, whimpering like my Mary when she took leave of me on the Barbican Stairs at Plymouth. Poor wench ! she said we should never meet more, and she kept her word—worse luck for me !” (Here the feelings of his honest heart overcame him, and he sobbed audibly.)

“The freebooter, Death, bore down upon her, and poor Mary was forced to strike; so we all must when he lays his grappling irons on board, and fires a broadside into our hull. It is his victory now, though I trust his great Commander will one day *destroy him* ; then we shall have smooth water, and I shall sail gallantly into port, with Mary by my side.

“ Come, come, sorrow’s dry ; I’ll get a can of grog to drown melancholy, and you shall take a sup, then turn into my birth, and sleep the first watch. I know you are an honest little fellow, and if you take to salt water, I hope I shall live to see you a gallant Officer. I like your country

country very well; I have fought beside them in many an engagement, but never beheld a Scotchman flinch in the hour of danger; bold as lions, they never turn their backs on an enemy."

The greater part of this speech had been addressed to a sleeping auditor; he was now awakened by his kind host, who having compelled him to taste a sailor's nectar, being the first spirits he had ever drank, soon returned him to the arms of Morpheus; in which happy oblivion of care he was undressed by Tom, and put into his hammock.



CHAP. II.

ON Andrew's awaking the next morning, finding himself in a dark place, suspended in a canvas bag, that his exertions to extricate himself from set in a full swing, all his last night's fears of ghosts and goblins returned ; he roared aloud for help in all the agony of terror, which being heard by Tom, he called out—

“ Avast, young Sawney ! don't fire off your patereroes quite so fast, or I shall be after laying my ratan across your shoulders.”

Descending .

Descending into the hold, he perceived the fright the young traveller was in; his face pale, and covered with tears, and his curled auburn locks extended with fright, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." After he had enjoyed a hearty laugh at his dismayed appearance, he extricated him from his perilous station. Having given him his clothes, he introduced him to the Captain. Tom had told his story before, as how the little Scot had taken a strange fancy to see the world, and be a great man, for which purpose he had travelled to Glasgow.

"No uncommon circumstance that, Tom, for a North Briton to emigrate, with the idea of being a great man; and they generally make their words good, by hook or by crook. Luck and perseverance do much toward making a fortune; both these are united in a Scotchman."

Andrew now made his appearance before the Sovereign of this wooden empire. It was a London trader. He told him, in a voice rough as his element, that he was a wicked little varlet to run away from his parents, to whom he must directly return. This terrifying sentence threw the trembling culprit into an agony of tears, while on his knees he prayed they would not send him back, but employ him on board, and he would serve them honestly.

His entreaties melted the rugged bosom of the Captain to commiseration, who told Tom Reefem, that as he seemed a sturdy, strong boy, if he liked to take a trip by sea, instead of travelling by land to see the world, he did not care if he kept him. This proposal was received with joyful avidity by the young truant, and met the hearty concurrence of honest Tom, who having taken a great fancy to him, swore he would make him a good British sailor; and he kept his word.

Whatever

Whatever ship Tom sailed on board, he contrived that Andrew should accompany him, who, from his instructions, was become alert and clever in his profession ; could run up the shrouds like a cat, and reef and furl almost as well as his tutor, who was quite proud of his scholar : nor did he neglect his learning ; whenever they were in harbour, paying out of his own stipend, to have him taught arithmetic, navigation, &c.

His benefactor's reiterated acts of kindness were not lost upon the grateful heart of Stuart, to whom he appeared as a second father, and as such he loved, honoured, and obeyed him. When he was fourteen, he, with his adopted parent, entered on board a West India-man, bound on a trading voyage to Jamaica ; Tom as mate, and Andrew as able seaman. They were truly happy, because contented in their station. They returned to England, after having made a successful trip of three

c 2

years.

years, in which the hard-earned savings of Reefem had been laid out to good advantage, that, to use his own words, he might, when his hulk was laid by, have wherewithal to keep the timbers together.

His messmate Andrew had been likewise thrifty; he was become a fine young man, with a good natural understanding, which a fondness for reading had much improved. He had a great share of nautical knowledge, a heart grateful, affectionate, and honest. He determined, like the prodigal son, to return to his long deserted home, request forgiveness of his parents, and, accompanied by their blessing, enter into the Navy, to push his fortune in the profession he loved.

Alas! all those visionary schemes of happiness, so delightful in perspective, were not yet to be realized. Antecedent to their ship entering the river, war had been declared against France; the hands
of

of all the trading vessels were pressed as soon as they dropped their anchors. How repugnant must be the feelings of a Briton, who is taught to call himself the son of a land of freedom, when he is fated to behold a pestiferous gang of men-hunters, who are granted warrants *vi et armis*, to tear from their ships the veteran seaman, who after having gained by honest labour a hard-earned pittance, under the scorching dog-star's burning heat, or shivered through a half year's night on Greenland's steril coast, when returning to reap the reward of his toil, by this destructive power is dragged away like a criminal, thrown into a hold, condemned to breathe the contaminated air of a dungeon, to hear the execrations of wretches suffering mental and bodily pain, more acute than is often felt by the most atrocious culprit against the laws of his country.

Behold his little property lost, by his detention, to those dear relatives for

whose sake he sought to acquire it ; his mourning wife and helpless children whom, after years of toil and absence, he is not permitted to see or embrace ! This is too frequently the fate of a brave, loyal, and honest race of men, who fight for the protection of that liberty and those laws, which are thus outraged in their persons.

This is a faint transcript of the reception prepared for the two friends. They beheld the boat come along-side which was to enslave their persons, render nugatory the action of free-will, and crush their air-built castles of happiness to the earth. An alarm of the press-gang's approach being given, Tom sprang on the deck, calling to Andrew to follow him, swearing he would not be taken alive ; the latter assured him that he would stand by him while he had a drop of blood in his veins, and the rest of the crew avowed the same sentiments. The fight commenced ;
desperate

desperate was the conflict. At length, overpowered by numbers, the oppressors conquered; the gallant comrades were seized, and conveyed to the boat, but not before the head of Tom was laid open by a cutlass, and Andrew (who fought like a lion by his side) was silenced by a blow from a bludgeon that was levelled at him from behind, as he stood across in desperate fury, over, as he thought, the dead body of his second father, dealing well-aimed blows at his numerous assailants.

These unfortunate friends recovered not to a sense of their miserable situation, till roused by the pain of another degradation, that of putting them in irons, which was done at the command of an officer of the gang, while he d——d them for mutinous dogs, whom he would bring to the gangway for disputing the King's orders. The agony that wrung the tender heart of Andrew, when he beheld the dreadful cut on the

c 4

head

head of his beloved Tom, beggared all description. When he saw the blood pouring down his silver locks, and mixing with the tears that trickled over his pale face—these flowed not for the fear of imprisonment, wounds, or death, but for those shameful fetters, that sank deep, and corroded his gallant heart—his adopted son tore his shirt, bound up his wounds, folded him in his arms, soothed, comforted, wept, and prayed over him.

At the earnest intercession of Andrew, a surgeon visited and dressed their hurts ; a fleet being at that time waiting at Portsmouth for men, this request was complied with, and as soon as their wounds were healed, they, with many others, were sent to that port. The most poignant grief felt by this modern Damon and Pythias, arose from the apprehension of being separated : neither could bear to think of this event ; but here Fortune befriended them ;

them ; they both were ordered aboard the Admiral's ship, which soon after, with the rest of the fleet, sailed in pursuit of the enemy. An engagement took place ; young Stuart distinguished himself, gallantly taking the lead in boarding the ship, and being the first man to hawl down the colours. This occasioned him to be noticed by the Admiral, who sent for him, and having heard his story, and commended his courage, ordered him to be rated as Midshipman.

It was a proud day for Tom, when he saw his prognostics verified, and his dear boy in the high road to attain the preferment he had prophesied would await him. Mr. Stuart (with that unremitting perseverance that forms a leading trait in the national character of a Scotchman) diligently attended to the duties of his profession, which he fulfilled in a manner that rendered him respected by his superiours, and almost idolized by those who were subordinate to his
c 5 orders.

orders. Whenever his Commander shifted his flag, he took Andrew with him; he was accompanied by Tom, who swore they would never part till Death shivered his mainsail. Their friendship was become proverbial throughout the ship. About this period Mr. Stuart met with an adventure that convinced him there were affections more tender and delightful, than any he had as yet experienced.

The ship he then belonged to being returned to Portsmouth to refit, before his friend the Admiral struck his flag to set out for London, he sent for Andrew, with whose conduct he was much pleased, and said he was very anxious to serve him; as soon, therefore, as his time was elapsed, he would exert his interest to have him made a Lieutenant.

Mr. Stuart, elated with these bright prospects, felt his desire of seeing the world return; his knowledge of it had
been

been hitherto bounded within the duties of his profession. He wished to make a trip to the metropolis; induced to this by the nephew of a Nobleman who had been his messmate, and professed for him a very warm attachment. Having procured leave of absence, he left his friend Tom for the *first* time since their meeting at Glasgow. He was now made Master's Mate, and would not quit his post, though to part with Stuart gave his honest heart a severe pang.

The friends proceeded to the great city in a Portsmouth stage, which having set down Mr. Stuart at the Golden Cross, his companion, the Honourable Mr. Nesbit, departed for his uncle's house in Cavendish Square, where Stuart promised to visit him next day. At eleven o'clock he accordingly walked to Lord Orpington's; where being shewn into a room, while he waited he was compelled to

hear the following dialogue, carried on in female voices. One appeared all fire and fury; the other spoke in accents tremulously soft, but modestly assured.

“ I say, Miss, what do you mean by daring to dispute my will and pleasure? Don't I know what is best for you? Have you not to thank me for being in your present splendour? Did I not take you from abject servitude, give you a place in my carriage, and a seat at my table?”

“ You did, and portentous was the hour in which I accepted your offers, and quitted the exertions of honest industry, to partake the bitter bread of dependance, most dearly purchased by the loss of comfort, joy, and freedom.”

“ Vastly well ! mighty fine, all this ! God grant me patience to keep my hands from your simpering face, you saucy minx ! Is this your gratitude for taking you from bucking clothes, scouring

scouring irons, scrubbing floors, and twirling mops, to oppose nature, and make a lady of you? And after having bestowed so much money on your education, and loaded you with favours, you have the temerity to refuse complying with what is so much for your interest: but if you know not what is best for yourself, I do; I am therefore determined you shall accept the offers of his Lordship."

"Never! never! Let me return to the poverty in which I was born, and gain a livelihood by the labour of my hands; for then I should be enabled to lie down on my straw mat with a conscience devoid of guile. I shall work cheerly, and sleep soundly; no matter how mean the employment by which I can retain my innocence. In vain you use threats or caresses to move me from my purpose; I will not be the mistress of the first Lord in the land. My highest ambition is to be the
wife

wife of an honest worthy man in my own sphere."

" Insolent ingrate, tremble at my meditated vengeance! Insect, that I can annihilate, crush into atoms, dare you turn and insult me, to whom you owe every thing, by this fine rodomontade of honesty, virtue, modesty, and poverty! You learn all this nonsensical jargon from the Novels you read. I grant they are high sounding names, that do very well upon paper, but I recommend it to you to descend from your romantic altitudes, and accept the mere matter of fact comforts of a fine house, carriage, and servants, with five hundred pounds a year, though an old Lord is entailed upon the bargain."

" I have, in answer to all you urge, only to repeat what I have invariably asserted, that I heartily despise both the man and his offers, which nothing shall induce me to recede from. I am
amazed

amazed you can advise me to lead a life that your own experience must daily convince you is at best but splendid wretchedness. Shut out from the society of the estimable and virtuous of her own sex, insulted by degrading offers from men whom the most correct conduct in such a situation cannot convince that the woman, who has descended from that sphere which she never ought to have quitted, to live what is fashionably termed a life of honour with one man, will not easily be prevailed on, through inclination or vanity, to share her favours with another. She is therefore exposed to receive the most dishonourable overtures from those who seek the notoriety of rivalling their dearest friend."

"Vastly well, Madam; I hope you give me credit for patience! How long have you set yourself up as a censurer of my actions?"

"I have

“ I have heard all *you* can say upon the subject, I therefore trust you will allow me to proceed in my portrait of such an unfortunate being. She is a mark for the finger of scorn to point at, condemned to witness the averted eye, the insulting sneer of those she *once* called friends. With the world she has no consequence; she deceives herself if, induced by vanity, she supposes that any can be derived from the trappings of vice, the pompous equipage, the most fashionable dress, or glittering diamonds, that can be acquired by a dereliction from virtue; they attract notice, but not respect. The men, who in the zenith of her power load her with fulsome flattery, crowd at night into her box at the Opera, form her levee in the morning, and hang upon her chariot door as it stops in Bond Street or Pall Mall, to catch the vacant gaze of the lounging ephemera of the day; should they meet her the

next

next hour, when in company with their wives, mothers, or sisters, their averted heads plainly shew they dare not make her a bow."

"Allowing the fact, of what value or consequence is their notice?"

"It must be a mortifying consideration to a heart not totally depraved; but let us follow her from the gay crowd to her home. What are the domestic comforts that there await her? Idle, extravagant, insolent servants, who always feel, and not seldom express, that they are conferring an obligation, by living with a personage to whom they are attached by no motive but interest, whom to impose on, and to impoverish, they think highly meritorious. Having herself no character, she is disabled from giving one to them. This is a faint transcript of the life of a woman who has swerved from virtue, which, knowing all its perils, you would have me embrace, and take the desperate leap,
clearly

clearly perceiving the gulph that must inevitably entomb my present joys and future hopes !”

At the conclusion of this speech, Mr. Stuart heard her rise to leave the room, when he meditated an escape, that he might not appear as a listener. He was again rooted to the spot by the most frantic exclamations.

“ I vow to the Almighty you shall instantly quit this house, with just what you had when you entered it—a cotton gown, cloth apron, and straw hat ! No saucy commentator on my actions shall partake the advantages derived from the defalcation of that virtue, the text on which you have preached so fine a sermon !—Go, ungrateful wretch ! array yourself in all you can call your own ! Never let me see you more ! I tear from my bosom all affection, disclaim all ties of consanguinity ; you are no longer a *sister* of mine !”

CHAP.



CHAP. III.

THE last word he had heard pronounced, made the honest heart of Stuart shudder in his bosom. He had listened with mingled horror and astonishment to the arguments urged in favour of splendid prostitution. But how was their atrocity heightened in his opinion, when convinced they were the sentiments of a woman who, abandoned herself, endeavoured to draw her *sister* into the whirlpool of folly, dissipation, and vice ! For such a monster he felt indignation, disgust, and hatred ; while tenderness, admiration, esteem, and

and love, attached him to the dignified champion of virtuous poverty ; he was charmed by the firm decision of her character, her energetic reasoning, and the vivid colouring in which she portrayed the contumelious insults, degradation, and contempt, which ever attend the votaries of what is falsely called pleasure !

His mind wholly employed on what he had just heard, and his breast throbbing with contending emotions, he forgot where he was, and the occasion of his being there, till aroused from his reverie by the entrance of the footman that had admitted him, who apologized for having made him wait, by saying he had been sent out directly ; that he thought Mr. Nesbit breakfasted at home, but found that he had left the house early, and a message with the porter, to inform Mr. Stuart, when he called, he would dine with him at the British Coffee House, at five o'clock.

He

He was very desirous to know who were the ladies whose conversation he had just overheard, which by the profound silence that now prevailed, he supposed had quitted the adjoining apartment; but struck with the meanness and impropriety of tampering with a servant, he departed, without any further knowledge of the fair *incognita*, whose sentiments had raised such warring conflicts in his hitherto untouched heart.

As he turned from the habitation that contained the object on which his thoughts still lingered, he paced the pavement with slow and measured steps, unconscious of the passing time, or even where he was, till roused from the profundity of his cogitations by the opening of a door; on looking round, he found himself before the very house he had quitted an hour since. He perceived the porter let out a very pretty young woman, plainly and neatly
6 dressed,

dressed, who carried in her hand a small parcel tied in a handkerchief; when drawing her bonnet over her eyes, which appeared suffused with tears, she hurried past him.

Conviction flashed at once on his mind, that this must be the fair object of a sister's persecution, who undoubtedly had put her threat into execution, and abandoned her to a world where beauty, innocence, and poverty would be her direst foes. How should he act? If he lost this opportunity of speaking to her, and offering his service, Fate might never again put it in his power; but for a stranger to address her in the street, she might think an insult, and resent it accordingly. Our young sailor felt all the diffidence of a genuine passion; softened by her sorrow, and charmed by the beauty of her person, he was already gone an age in love!

How

How to conduct himself with propriety in a situation so new to him, was the occasion of much distress. He continued to follow her, unconscious of his purpose, till at the end of Bond Street she called a coach, and ordered it to drive to Newington. What was now to be done? The little God ever instructs his votaries; he threw himself into another vehicle, bidding the driver keep close to the preceding carriage, and on no account to lose sight of, or pass it. In an hour's ride they both stopped at the same time before a small house; over the door was a board, and painted upon it, "Mrs. Hunt, mantua maker and milliner." On the window a note, announcing a front room to be let in the two pair of stairs.

He waited while she discharged her coach; then bidding his draw up to a public house nearly opposite, where being shewn into a room, he began to reflect how he was to proceed. He
could

could not bear the idea of seeing this lovely unfortunate girl no more ; if he lost sight of her now, that was most likely to be the consequence. He knew, from what he had overheard her sisters say, that she had turned her out poor and helpless. He had at the moment a sum in the hands of his Agent, the produce of his pay and prize money ; he knew no purpose to which it could be so well applied, as to relieve the distresses of a virtuous and worthy young woman.

The urgency of the case called for prompt decision ; the conscious rectitude of his intentions, the disinterestedness of his motives in offering her pecuniary assistance, and the honourable sensations he felt for her, gave him courage, and he wrote the following note :—

MADAM,

MADAM,

A person, by a strange combination of events, has been made acquainted with the unjustifiable treatment to which you have been exposed, for a conduct that, with the good and virtuous, must render you revered and honoured. Such are the feelings by which the writer of this is actuated, when he earnestly entreats that you will permit him to converse with you for a few minutes. The necessity he is under of returning directly to London, and his ardent wish to alleviate by any means within his limited powers the misfortunes he deplores, will, he hopes, excuse the temerity of the request of one who is ambitious of subscribing himself

Your obliged friend,

And obedient servant.

Not knowing how to address his fair *incognita*, he sealed and inclosed it in a cover to Mrs. Hunt, requesting that she would deliver it to the lady who had just alighted from a hackney coach at her house. The messenger was desired to say, the gentleman who sent it waited at the King's Head for an answer. The young woman to whom it was wrote, astonished at its purport, and frightened at the idea of her route being traced by some emissary of her persecutors, read aloud the contents to her friend, and solicited her advice, how she should act in so delicate a situation.

Mrs. Hunt was honest, kind-hearted, voluble, and passionate; all those propensities of her nature had been roused into action by the recital she had just heard from her visiter, who was literally turned out of doors by her unnatural sister, without clothes or money;—to her she had flown for shelter, till she could

could procure a place in some respectable family, that would yield her protection from the machinations of Lord Lorimore, and the artifices she knew would be practised to throw her into his power.

This good creature, on hearing the letter, said she thought it appeared to her to be from some person who really meant well; but in this wicked world it was best to be certain, for when people could not place confidence in their own relations, they ought to mistrust every body. She therefore would go to the King's Head, and see what sort of a man it was, and should soon discern whether his intentions were honourable.

“Who knows, my poor child, but God has raised you up a friend in the hour of your sorrow, to reward your virtuous behaviour!”

“In vain her young friend pointed out the impropriety of noticing a letter

without a name, which might be contrived to entrap her into the power of her enemies. Mrs. Hunt, with a precipitancy natural to her, having put on her bonnet and cloak, desired she would leave it all to her, and she would manage the whole business properly.

In a few minutes she had darted across the road, and was shewn into the room where Mr. Stuart was measuring the floor, in eager expectation of the return of his messenger. Without any circumlocution or apology, she thus entered upon her mission.

"I presume, Sir, you are the person that inclosed a letter to me, for a young woman just arrived at my house. Now as it would be very improper for her either to answer it, or see you, before she knows who you are, having very great reasons to mistrust the designs of your sex, I am come, as her friend, to request an explanation of what may be your intentions."

"I assure

"I assure you, Madam, they are perfectly honourable; if the lady will permit me to speak to her in your presence, I will convince her that I have no sinister views, but literally mean, if she will permit me, to protect and serve her disinterestedly."

"I must say you talk this well, and have a very honest looking face. I am old and wary; you must therefore excuse me if, having been often deceived by appearances, I cannot trust to a fair outside, which often covers a foul heart. As I before said, this young creature has, worse luck, many foes; you must therefore, before I admit you to see her, convince me that you are not in league with them there imps of darkness, and if not, what were your reasons for following her to this place."

"As I respect your motives for caution, and am acquainted with the justice of your suspicions, I feel no

anger that they have reached me, who I am conscious have introduced myself to the notice of your friend too abruptly; not to appear in a questionable shape; but the urgency of the case will, I hope, plead my excuse."

"I dares to say it will, for I am mightily taken with your countenance; as I like one that will bear *spection*; for my poor dear dead husband used to say, an honest man is not afraid to look a Lord in the face. And why should he? says I; he's made of the same materials, comes into the world as helpless, and carries just as much out with him! Noble's he that noble doth, says Sarah Hunt. But I'm talking, that's my great fault, when I should be hearing; you must know I am so angry just now with one of the assortment, that I can't for the life of me help speaking my mind. Now if you please to tell me your business with my friend."

"That

“That will be easily explained. Chance conducted me this morning to the house of Lord Orpington, where I was shewn into an apartment, I suppose next to the breakfast room, when I could not avoid hearing a conversation that agonized my heart with various sensations.”

Here he recounted the dialogue with which our readers are already acquainted; of his following her fair friend till he saw her alight at Newington, induced to do so by esteem for the sentiments he had heard her express before he had seen her, and compelled by admiration of her personal charms when he beheld her. These were the motives which had impelled him to solicit an interview, that he might offer her any pecuniary assistance within his power. He was only a sailor of fortune, who had in the hands of his agent about a hundred pounds, honestly acquired in the service of his country. Any part, or the whole, he

D 4

should

3

should be happy if she would accept; to him it was no object, who could go to sea for more."

Mrs. Hunt, who had been impatiently waiting for a pause, said—

"Well to be sure, how rejoiced I am that I was not mistaken in my *prophecies*; most certainly you are a charming young man, and I would rather see Isabella Nelson married to you, than to the first Lord in the land, for they do nothing but prowl about the streets, and ruin young women."

"I thank you most sincerely, Mrs. Hunt, for your good opinion, which I hope I shall never give you occasion to alter."

"I dares to say you will not; I therefore think it is right and proper, you that are so open and generous, should know who it is you would serve, for Isabella is my god-daughter, and I first saw her blue eyes open upon this world; I am therefore ready and willing to tell you all about her."

CHAP.

"I have

“I have no curiosity on the occasion; I know she is poor, I am sure she is virtuous, I seek no more, and I will now take my leave, being obliged to meet a friend at five o'clock; but I shall feel myself infinitely obliged, if you will acquaint Miss Nelson with our conversation, and use your interest to induce her to receive a visit from me to-morrow, when I mean to do myself the pleasure of waiting upon her. I hope I shall then find her mind restored to tranquillity by the exertions of your kind friendship.”

They now parted, mutually pleased with each other. Mrs. Hunt returned to the fair Isabella, full of admiration at the generosity of Mr. Stuart, on which she dwelt loud and long, assuring her blushing auditress that he was violently in love with her, and she was certain sure would make her a good husband; and concluded by ardently recommending her not to refuse him, should he offer himself to her acceptance.

CHAP. IV.

MRS. HUNT, to whom the persecuted Isabella Nelson had flown for shelter, was a good sort of woman in the *real* acceptation of the word; she was honest, poor, and charitable; had formerly lived as housekeeper, and her husband as butler, in the family of a gentleman, whose seat was situated near Morpeth, in the county of Northumberland. At that period the mother of Isabella was an attendant upon the young ladies, which service she left to become the second wife of John Nelson, who rented a small farm

farm in the neighbourhood. His daughter Barbara was then seven years old. He proved a profligate and morose husband, and she died, to use a gossip's phrase, broken-hearted, when she had been a mother just twelve months, with her last breath recommending her infant to the friendship of Mrs. Hunt.

She soon after, to the misfortune of the little Isabella, with her helpmate, left Morpeth for London, meaning to increase their mutual savings by some of the numerous ways, they had been taught to believe fortunes were quickly acquired in that flourishing city. After various efforts, with as mutable success, Mrs. Hunt was now a widow, in possession of a small house at Newington, which she let out in lodgings, and practised the trades of mantua-making and millinery, for the humble class of her neighbours, to whom durability was a greater object than fashion.

Home, bottom, son, good, and
and

She had ever kept in view Barbara Nelson through all her eventful changes, though any personal intercourse was equally avoided by both parties; one shunning, in the zenith of her splendour, the person who knew the low origin from whence she sprang, and the means by which it was acquired; while the other shrank with honest pride from the degradation of associating with the disciple of vice.

When Barbara was nine years old, and Isabella two, their father died a martyr to folly and extravagance; having taken no care of his children, and dissipated almost the whole of his little property, the creditors seized what remained, and the orphans were sent to the parish. A workhouse seldom keeps any person of whom it can rid itself; the philanthropic sensations that actuate country churchwardens being proverbial, there needs but to observe they were not induced by them to retain on

in their list a pauper sturdy enough to labour:—such then was the fate allotted to Barbara Nelson, who, being stout, muscular, and healthy, was deemed, by these sapient overseers, equal to gaining her own maintenance.

She was accordingly apprenticed to a neighbouring farmer for seven years, in which she contrived to live through, in despite of hunger, cold, nakedness, and stripes, that she was fated alternately to endure; these being practised to conquer her unbending spirit. As soon might they have sought to tame the fierce Hyrcanian tiger, as to render her docile.

Barbara Nelson's person promised to be handsome, on the large scale of beauty. There was a *fierté* in her eyes, a commanding boldness in her manner, that awed the timid, charmed the few, and disgusted the many. Her features took their impression from the workings of a mind powerful and energetic.

Like

Like the son of Alknumook, she scorned to complain, but bore, with a stubborn firmness, and ferocious courage, the inflictions of those she called her unfeeling taskmasters. Her passions, not repressed by education, softened by religion, awed by fear, or subdued by restraint, were violent, impetuous, terrible, and destructive as an Arabian whirlwind, to all who opposed their progress, threatening devastation, ruin, and death. Aroused to action, they were to be dreaded like the portentous tornado, whose approach shakes the firm limbs, and blanches the sable cheek of Afric's hardy sons.

To this sketch of the character of a woman formed in no common mould, we should add, that she was vain and ambitious, with an eager thirst of power. A tyrant in her heart, she looked forward with rapture to the time that would enable her to exercise that coercive dominion over others, to which she
for

for seven years had been herself subjected. Say, those who make the various meanders of the human mind their study, why is it ever thus that the crouching slave, when his turn to rule arrives, becomes a most cruel master to his dependants? The Commander of a ship, exalted from before the mast, and the Colonel, raised from the ranks, ever make rigid, unrelenting martinets. Doth this arise from an inherent love of sway in our natures, or a savage thirst of revenge, that thus induces us to immolate to the *manes* of our past inor-tification, the present victims of our power? Certain it is, that no set of people exact more homage, or use the authority delegated to them with greater severity, than the subordinate classes of mankind, when, by some work of supererogation, they in their turn become rulers!

Barbara, her apprenticeship being served, at sixteen years found herself
free;

free;—her master was obliged to clothe her in home-spun dowlas, and coarse habiliments; and she determined on leaving the place that had witnessed her poverty, in which she had, literally speaking, scarce existed. To London then she bent her steps, which every village maid and rustic swain who wander forth, look forward to as the sure haven of profit and pleasure. With sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks, arrayed in a black beaver hat tied under her chin, a striped linsey jacket and coat, on her legs a pair of black worsted stockings, on her arm hung a red cloak, in her hand she carried a handkerchief that contained the rest of her wardrobe, consisting of a change of linen; thus equipped, Barbara bade a joyful adieu to her native home.

As she journied on with a light heart, like the Persian glassman, she saw pass before her mental vision scenes of pleasure, prospects of happiness, and future grandeur; though

though she had not knowledge enough of that world she was about to enter, to form a just idea in what its joys consisted. Determined to make her fortune at the means by which it was to be acquired, she did not intend to demur. Barbara resolved not, like her prototype, by carelessness to kick down the golden vision.

It was May when she left the North, and she soon encountered some females who had emigrated like herself, and meant to work for the hay season. Having joined their party, they agreed to seek employment together. It would in trench too much on the space we have allotted to this story, to follow Barbara through all her turnings and difficulties to procure a scanty subsistence, such as hay-making, strawberry and hop picking, &c. But used to laborious employment, and hard fare, she was not deterred from her purpose, and resolved to persevere till Fortune changed in her favour.

her *presentiment* was strong that the fickle goddess would one day do so. Thus assured, she went into the country with her itinerant companions, to help to get in the harvest; the men called her Bonny Barbara, and would have been very kind in their way, but she set too high a value on her charms to throw them away on the Fawns and Dryads of the woods; while the women both envied and feared her, having in several skirmishes exhibited her pugilistic skill, in which they had often been obliged to give in, as the intrepid champion of the North carried off the honours of the field.

Winter at last appeared, and in its train brought lack of labour, cold, and poverty. Barbara was unused to the scientific work expected in a London servant;—finding it necessary to eat, she was compelled to descend to the humble occupation of carrying out porter, having hired herself for that employ-

ment of Long Annuities Company.

ment at the Rose and Thistle, Wapping. Here the blind deity she had so long supplicated, deigned to smile, by throwing in her way a young man of the name of Stormer, whose father was just dead, after having gleaned together no inconsiderable property, by crediting the honest Tars with slops, for which he charged treble their value, taking care to procure their wills and powers, to enable him to receive their wages. As the devastations of war cut short the return of many of his valiant customers, old Stormer grew, like his contemporary contractors, rich by the same means that made the nation poor.

As we cannot enjoy riches always, by whatever means acquired, Death having called upon him, in the form of an apoplectic fit, to settle his accounts in the other world, his only son Stephen stepped into quiet possession of his stock and trade; in this, with the embellishments of Long Annuities, Consols, India

India Bonds, &c. Stephen justified the idea of David Hume, that a fool may beget a philosopher, and a philosopher a fool; for he was too honest to acquire money by the means his father did, and too good-natured to retain it when gotten for him.

Barbara, as she supplied the tap-room politicians with Whitbread's Intire, had often heard the fortune of young Stormer discussed, and how easy it would be for a knowing girl to fall into present pay and good quarters. Not a word of these conversations was lost on the artful Barbara, who looked on this to be the object to realize all her long cherished hopes of ease and opulence. As she had no false diffidence about making the first advances, or any doubt of conquest when they were made, it only remained to put herself in his way. This she contrived to do by frequently visiting the shop to purchase ribbons, handkerchiefs, and stockings.

At

At those times she paid particular attention to her toilet, heedless of the shrill exclamations of the Landlady of the Thistle, at her dressing up her impudent face, while the business of the tap stood still.

Barbara was too independent a spirit to receive any abuse she did not return with interest; it therefore generally ended in a drawn battle. In the interim all went on right; her well-managed plot against the susceptible heart of honest Stephen, promised success beyond her most sanguine hopes. She saw every thing depended on secrecy and dispatch; that if it once got talked about in the neighbourhood, a host of foes would arise against her, in the form of *disinterested* advisers, who had daughters or sisters of their own to provide for. To avoid this, she told an artful tale to Stephen, that the club of tradesmen who met at the Rose and Thistle, were always speaking against him,

him, and turning him into ridicule behind his back, saying that his father was an old knave, who was gone straight to the Devil, and that he was a young fool, that would send his ill-gotten pelf the same road.

This story, composed of both truth and falsehood, answered all the purposes intended by its reciter; keeping her lover from the only house where his folly could betray his passion, and frustrate her intentions.

Mr. Stormer laid himself down before the garrison of Barbara's charms, who had offered to capitulate, if allowed to march out with all the honours of matrimony! the blind urchin had shot such pointed darts from the bright eyes of his dulcinea, that albeit he thought the terms of surrender hard of digestion, he was compelled to accept them, not being able to procure any amelioration of the treaty from his fair antagonist.

Early

Early on a Saturday morning, while her mistress was screaming from cellar to garret, for Bab to scour the pewter pots, she was on her way to the parish church, from whence she soon returned Mrs. Stormer, fraught with all the consequence she felt, and determined to make others feel, from the change in her situation.

Great was the surprise of the guests at the Rose and Thistle, when assembled for their morning whet, on hearing the bells pealing merrily for a wedding, and being informed it was for their neighbour young Stephen. But who was the fortunate, envied bride was yet disputing by the junto, when an invitation arrived from Mrs. Stormer, to the host and hostess, requesting their company to partake of the wedding dinner.

“Sartin sure, wee’ll come,” replied the rosy-gilled dame; “but who is thy mistress, Margery? I hopes as she be a
clever

clever body, and brings thy master *summut* to help carry on the war in these hard taxatious times for us poor housekeepers, who be obliged to pay scot and lot."

"As to her cleverness," answered Margery, ironically, "I think she has shewed a *mort* of that, or she would never have *veigled* herself into such a good birth; that she had no right to *spect* more *nor* I. As to helping to fight, I don't doubt but she'll do that main well; for I be cruelly mistaken if she have'n't the first word and the last blow. But Measter must look to that; as he brews, so he must bake, a can't expect a silken purse from a sow's ear."

"I'm sorry to hear this," quoth the landlord, "for Stephen's sake; I fear it bodes no good to him, whom I have carried in my arms when he was not as big as this porter pot. He was always harmless and good-natured, but wanted it *here*," patting his forehead.

"Did

"Did he so," interrupted an arch fellow, a rasper of beards (who had listened to the dialogue, as he swallowed his pennyworth of purl in a corner), "I doubt, according to Margery's account, that's a tenement that will be fully occupied in a very short time."

"Well, all that's stuff, and nothing to the purpose," replied his spouse, "if it be so. I'm quite in a quandary to know who the bride be; I *longs* for to see her; I *supposes* I must be a little smartish on the *casion*, but I can't go for to look out my clothes till that impudent vagabond Bab chuses for to come back, whom I have not set my eyes on these two hours."

Margery, having first indulged herself with a hearty laugh, said—

"Well, that's as good as ever I *hard*; if you wait for she to return here, you will not eat any of our turbot and turkey to-day. Lord! I thought you knowed, or I should have told you long

ago, that it's *she* that's married to master."

"Oh! I shall faint; for the love of God, John, give me a drap of cordial: did I ever think it would have come to this? Soft, simple Stephen, to throw himself, and all his father's money away, that he toiled and moiled to scrape together, honest and dishonest, up early and late—for it to come at last to dizen out a parish bird, and enable her to elbow her betters! Artful slut! how sly she carried it on; but she'd no mind to be balked. Ah! I always thought that she was no better than she should be."

"Well, well, wife, that's nothing to the purpose; she's tied the knot now, and is become the rich Mrs. Stormer, so send a civil answer to her invitation."

"Ah! that's true," said his rib; "therefore, Madge, make haste back, and say we desires our best sarvices, and wishes much joy to the bride and bridegroom; shall be very happy to dine with them;

them ; and be sure don't forget to tell your new Lady that I'm in a monstrous hurry to make myself *dissent*, to wait upon her with my gratulations on her good fortune, of which she's *sartinly* so *dissarving*."

"What !" cried the astonished Margery (who did not understand the refinements of hypocrisy), "can I tell her this after what you have been just a saying? I shan't repeat so many palavering lies ; I'll say, you'll come to dinner, and when you be there, you may do as you like."

This, and a great deal more of inflated, adulatory praise, was offered on the altar of wealth, when they met, by the hostess of the Rose and Thistle, to her dear friend and neighbour, Mrs. Stormer !

The representation of this scene evinces to the mental optician, that the passions that actuate the bosoms, and degrade the conduct of high life, are

equally prevalent in the lower ranks of society; when the sevenfold shield of hypocritical deception drops, by a touch, from the talisman of truth, and the bad propensities that deform our nature, stand confessed, exposed to mortal ken, it will be found that the inmates of St. James's, and the inhabitants of Wapping, differ not so essentially as the proud claims of pre-eminence induce the former to imagine! The only distinction lies in the more exalted ranks of mankind being enabled, from the advantages of their education, to conceal, by elegant and appropriate language, the base artifices of a depraved heart!

CHAP. V.

LET us leave Mrs. Stormer to the enjoyment of her new dignities, while we inquire after her sister Isabella, whose infant limbs, rocked by the rugged nurse, Adversity, on the flinty pavement of a village workhouse, was left to struggle up to puberty, through the squalid wretchedness, and pinching poverty that pervade every department of those seminaries, raised by the hand of frozen charity, as a receptacle for debilitated age, and helpless infancy, supported by rates gathered from the grumbling rich, and given grudgingly to feed the unfortunate poor.

The conducters of these lazar houses, too frequently hardened by a view of human misery, are inattentive to the suffering inhabitants; which has been described with feeling, pathos, and energy by the Reverend Mr. Crabbe, in these charming lines of his Village Curate :---

“ There is yon house, that holds the parish poor,

“ Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;

“ There where the putrid vapours flagging play,

“ And the dull wheel hums doleful thro’ the day;

“ There children dwell who know no parent’s care,

“ Parents who know no children’s love, dwell there;

“ Heart-broken matrons, on their joyless bed,

“ Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed;

“ Dejected widows, with unheeded tears,

“ And crippled age, with more than childhood fears!

“ The lame, the blind, and far the happiest they!

“ The moping idiot, and the madman gay.”

Isabella,

Isabella, delicate in her form, inherited from her mother a consumptive habit. Exposed to the inevitable hardships of such a situation, her pure spirit would soon have flown to its Creator, had not the matron of the school beheld her with pity, having known her parents in the days of their prosperity. Her kindness reared this frail blossom, till it gained strength and beauty. When the surly overseer talked of putting her apprentice, she requested, as she was growing infirm, to be allowed to retain her as an assistant, for she had brought her up to be very useful.

After much grumbling altercation, it was settled the next court-day, by the assembled conclave, that the matron should be permitted to keep the daughter of Nelson two years longer. This was determined at the period Barbara meditated quitting her native home; she came to take leave of Isabella, who parted from her with many tears, as the

only being with whom she could claim any relationship. Her sister was too selfish in her disposition, and had too little tenderness in her nature, for the ties of consanguinity to agitate her firm nerves; therefore, after she had turned her back upon Morpeth, Isabella seldom entered her thoughts.

From her good friend, the matron, she received all the knowledge she was capable of teaching, which consisted of reading, spelling, knitting, and plain work. Determined to educate her *élève* properly for her station, she procured, to give her instruction in writing and arithmetic, an inhabitant of the workhouse, who had formerly been the schoolmaster of the village, at whose arbitrary mandate his infant subjects had trembled in the day of his power. Now hurled from his throne by sickness, sorrow, and poverty, he had been obliged to solicit from those whom he had subjected, when he swayed his birchen sceptre,

sceptre, to be received into this last asylum of human wretchedness.

Isabella soon improved by the united exertions of these good souls. She had quick parts, an earnest desire to learn, and much docility of disposition. Her patroness, possessed of natural good sense, and genuine piety, early instilled into the mind of her young pupil a steady attention to the duties of religion, a respect for truth, and a love of virtue. A structure, raised on such a foundation, will always stand firm against the blandishments of pleasure, and the attacks of vice.

At fourteen years of age, Isabella had the misfortune to lose her only friend. When the worthy woman found her end approaching, she called the weeping orphan, for whom she felt a truly maternal fondness, to her bed-side, and thus addressed her:—

“ I shall, my dear child, leave this world, where I have been bowed down

with many sorrows, without a pang, but for your future welfare; remember, you have but to practise those precepts I have so frequently inculcated; feel no false shame at honest poverty—oppose to it persevering industry. When you arrive at my present situation, you will experience how preferable a conscience void of reproach is, to the most sumptuous grandeur, acquired by vicious pursuits. Though young, you are not ignorant nor illiterate. Forget not that I have brought you up, aided by your own exertions, to gain a decent maintenance; do this, and my last prayers shall be, that God may bless and prosper your endeavours. I have desired my nephew to give you my clothes; it is all of my small property, I think, that I ought in justice to bestow from him, who is now my only surviving relation.”

Isabella, whose susceptible heart, overflowed with grateful affection for
6 the

the innumerable benefits she had received from her, whom she was now about to lose for ever, suffocated by sobs, flung herself on her knees, and threw her arms around her dying friend, repeatedly thanking her for her goodness to a desolate orphan, promising that she would follow all her counsels. The exhausted sufferer faintly pressed the hand of Isabella, laid her head upon her bosom, lifting her eyes benignantly to her face, and expired without a groan !

Lost in the torpor of real grief, some time elapsed ere Isabella thought in what manner she was to dispose of herself ; when the delegates of the parish being assembled, their decree soon aroused her from the enervating apathy she had sunk into, since the death of her second mother, by informing her that they had too many mouths to fill, to keep her any longer, who was a dead weight on the charity ; that she must instantly provide herself with another habitation,

habitation, or they should be obliged to seek employment for her.

The Curate of the hamlet, who had, in his professional capacity, attended on the good matron, noticed Isabella, whose bland manners, and modest deportment, were so different from the general inmates of a poor-house. He had made some inquiries of her friend, who gave her a good character, expressing a fervent wish that she might fall into proper hands, as she had no prospect of future support but labour. Having consulted with his wife, he determined to take the deserted orphan, to attend his children.— He arrived to execute this benevolent purpose at the critical moment when the mourning Isabella had just heard her irrevocable sentence of banishment thundered from the rostrum, by Samuel Shark, Esq. Attorney, and Justice of the Quorum.

Mr. Norton, who guessed the business that had been transacted, by finding
Isabella

Isabella in the hall of audience, beholding her wan cheek and tearful eye, he hastened to comfort the poor girl, by offering to receive her immediately into his service. This was most gratefully accepted; she prepared to follow him, and enter on her new employment; desirous to give satisfaction to those who had snatched her from impending misery, she thought no labour too hard; for of work there was no scarcity, as the Curate's family consisted of himself, his wife, their six children, an old woman who had nursed the father, and since acted in the same capacity to his offspring. She was now cook, brewer, butler, baker, dairy, laundry, and housemaid! To assist this useful ancient appendage of the parsonage house, in her various employments, Isabella was taken.

She performed the task assigned her cheerfully; conscious that the scanty income of a country parson, who had so many

many to maintain, and was obliged to appear decent for the credit of his profession, could not afford to keep more domestics than were really useful, she studied to render herself so, and had the satisfaction to succeed. Mr. and Mrs. Norton esteemed, the children loved, and old nurse gave her a good word, saying, though she was such a slip of a girl, she was handy and willing.

In this respectable family Isabella lived happy and contented, till she was sixteen years old. This era produced a wondrous change in her situation; her person, like her mind, was diametrically opposite to her sister's.—The one was a Thalestris, who appeared as if formed by Nature to hurl the javelin at the foaming boar, with strength to draw the bow of Ulysses, and courage “to seek the bubble reputation even in the cannon’s mouth.”—The other was truly feminine; her person rather below the middle size, delicately formed, blue eyes,

eyes, light hair, and good teeth; a pale blush suffused her countenance. The general tenor of her temper was mild, complying, and affectionate; but, as we have witnessed in her conversation with Mrs. Stormer, when her principles were treated with irony, her virtue alarmed, the energies of her mind aroused, her arguments were firm, her reasons impressive, and her conduct decided.

Mrs. Stormer, after she became a wife, ruled with an iron sceptre her ductile vassal. Had her perturbed passions allowed her to enjoy her situation, she might have lived respectable and happy. Her pride was severely mortified by residing in the neighbourhood, where her origin was so well known, that whenever she attempted to assume any consequential airs, she was compelled to hear exclaimed—

“How soon these upstarts forget themselves! It was but the other day she

she came to our house to bring a pint of porter."

These rebuffs determined her to quit Wapping. In vain her husband remonstrated the great loss it would be to him, who would, by a removal, have to seek a new set of customers, and to begin the world again. His wife was resolved, and he had nothing for it but unconditional submission. A large house and shop were taken on Tower Hill; the former was loaded with gaudy furniture, a set of servants hired for their proper departments, Mrs. Stormer announcing she meant to make a *splash*, visit the whole neighbourhood, and give card parties; as these concluded with a supper, composed of all the rarities in season, they were soon voted a good thing, and resorted to by all the gambling Dowagers, shuffling tabbies, and necessitous young men within the Hamlet!

Stephen, nicknamed the Simple, was a mere automaton. On these gala nights he

he moved as his lady wife directed, to snuff the candles, order the refreshments, or ascend to the nursery, to see if the children cried. Mrs. Stormer, in these meetings, soon lost both her money and reputation ; the latter being whispered away by her female acquaintance, who, with no more pretensions to chastity than herself, conducted their intrigues with greater cunning. For the artifices of such women, she was at *that time* no match.

Barbara, a voluptuary from principle, was sparing of no expence that could contribute to her own pleasure, or gratify her vanity by an ostentatious display of wealth : but *self* out of the question, she was meanly avaricious, feeding her family in the most penurious way when there was no company, and loading her table when she gave an entertainment. Between these extremes, they were alternately starved and feasted ! Those raised from the dregs
of

of the community, left to form their own character, cannot be expected to act consistently.



CHAP. VI.

LET us follow Mrs. Stormer to a whist-table, where, unable to calculate the odds, ignorant of the scientific part of the game, she played without knowledge, and betted without discretion. The natural consequence that ensued, was being plucked by the rooks that hovered round, and marked her as their destined prey. The desire to win another's money, that first induced her to play, made her furious at the loss of her own.

own. Thrown off her guard, the few decencies of life she had learned to assume were given to the winds, and her fortunate adversaries carried not away their spoils with impunity, condemned to suffer, from her vindictive rage, all the scurrility of purse-proud insolence.

This was overlooked by her acquaintance (for she had no *friends*), while any of the ill-acquired gains of old Stormer remained to be dissipated. A few years accomplished the business. Stephen, who, matched to a fury, had long found his house a hell, attempted, at the tavern, to drink oblivion to his woes.— This was a temporary respite. Alas! the morn, and misery returned! His shop was left to hirelings, who served themselves instead of the customers, while the sums, accumulated by his father, and placed in the different funds, had been sold out in portions to supply the extravagant profusion of his wife.

Ruin,

Ruin, with all its direful train of ills, now stared them in the face; and as rats forsake a sinking ship, his grateful helpmate revolved, in her fertile imagination, how she should avert the impending storm. Her glass informed her, that though past the bloom of youth, in the present world's opinion she was in the very zenith of personal perfection! The men had often said that she was of the first order of fine women. Mrs. Stormer was fully inclined to credit their assertions, wondering at the folly that had induced her so long to vegetate with a simple sottish seller of slops.

She resolved to throw herself in the way of Fortune, by removing to the more congenial atmosphere of St. James's, where she might find admirers better able to appreciate her charms. Convinced of the utility of gold in all undertakings, she took care to glean together all that remained of the harvest; having previously removed her wardrobe to

to the house of a friend in Clarges Street, she soon followed in a hackney-coach, and then sent a letter to her frantic husband, informing him, that as Heaven had taken their children, in his present deranged situation, a wife would only be an incumbrance : she had therefore, from pure kindness, relieved him from that burthen ; meaning never to trouble him more ; only desired equal generosity and forbearance on his part.

The disconsolate husband felt his wife's dereliction more acutely than all his other misfortunes ; he was not to be comforted at the receipt of this laconic epistle, for he still loved his Barbara with unfeigned affection, proving the assertion just, that use a man like a dog, and he will treat you like an angel. By the violent exacerbations of his rage, he exposed to his listening servants, who whispered it to his neighbours, who, in their turn, promulgated to his creditors the destruction of his property. Alarmed
they

they hastily called a meeting, which ended in his appearing a *Whereas* in the Gazette; but commiserating his situation, and laying the blame, where it was strictly due, on the extravagance of his wife, they agreed to sign his certificate, though the assets would not pay half a crown in the pound.

He would now have experienced the most abject poverty, but he recollected, and made an application to a man high in office, who, having formerly been a purser in the Navy, and at that time under obligations to his father for trusting him with slops to a considerable amount, procured him a small place in one of the under departments of Government; in alternate despair and inebriety, ineffectually regretting his easy nature, and cursing his profligate wife, he wore out a wretched existence.

Mrs. Stormer, in no want of money, by the assistance of her female acquaintance, was soon established in handsome apartments in Piccadilly; she threw off
the

the Gothic fashions of Tower Hill, and, in a short time, was equipped in the elegant habiliments of a woman of the *haut ton*. With the dress, she tried to assume the manners of those by whom she was surrounded. The task was difficult for one so low-born, illiterate, and vulgar, who had ever been used to do what she liked, and say what she thought. Her natural understanding pointed out to her the policy of masking the depravity of her heart, by not letting ambition, self-interest, detraction, envy, hatred, and jealousy appear in front! Effectually to do this, she found it necessary to soften her guttural sounds into gentle aspirations; she could occasionally assume the most sanctimonious countenance, converse on the beauty of rectitude, love of virtue, and the comforts of religion! By the practice of hypocrisy, she became, in appearance, a new being; but the old leaven still remained, when, thwarted
in

in her schemes of interest or pleasure, Barbara was herself again, appearing surrounded with all her attributes of vindictive malice, clamorous violence, and vulgar abuse.

Mrs. Lesley, to whom she had flown for an introduction into the gay world, was once ignorant, low, and poor, like herself; their acquaintance having commenced as they picked hops from the same pole. The winter that drove Barbara to Wapping, conducted her companion to Pall-Mall, where, being taken as a drudge into the kitchen of a fashionable gaming-house, she attracted the notice of one of the members of the club, who thought her a pretty girl, that might, if she was scrubbed, cleaned, and dressed, make a fine woman! This was no sooner planned than executed, Fanny's consent being easily obtained, who conceived it a fine thing to be her own mistress, wear smart clothes, and have a servant to attend her.

She

She was directly put into a hackney-coach, sent with a note to a milliner's in Bond Street, who was desired by the writer to transmute, by her magical power, the base alloy that accompanied it, into sterling gold. Fanny, purified by repeated ablutions, was dressed by the hands of Mrs. Frill, in an elegant dishabille; when led by that lady to the looking-glass, she started with pleasure and astonishment at a view of charms she was, till that moment, unconscious of possessing.

Fanny, attired by fashion, attracted general admiration, when, by her paramour, she was first introduced to the public eye. She was shrewd and artful; these qualities enabled her to perceive she might soon become a favourite with the town. Her fortune was, from that time, variable, sometimes riding in a hackney-coach, at others rolling in her own chariot. From a few of her numerous train of lovers, she had managed to

procure annuities to the amount of some hundreds.

She was, at the period of the elopement of Mrs. Stormer, the acknowledged *chère amie* of Sir Samuel Sapsull, a wealthy Baronet; had her box at the Opera, drove an elegant equipage, calculated to make vice fashionable, and put virtue out of countenance! She met Mrs. Stormer one night at Drury Lane Theatre, by whom she was immediately recognized, and their former intimacy renewed.

On visiting Mrs. Lesley, the superiority of her situation, and her splendid appearance, fixed the thorn of envy in the breast of her friend, who was convinced, that if she was placed in a proper point of view, to be seen and admired, she would soon equal, if not rival, her. From that instant she resolved to quit simple Stephen. How much to the credit of her feelings she executed her determination, has been shewn.

As

As soon as things were *en train*, Mrs. Stormer was seen at the Opera in Mrs. Lesley's box. As a new face, every glass in Fop's Alley was pointed at her, and she was unanimously voted a d——d fine woman by the libertine loungers of the *parterre*.

"Don't you think," said Lord William Sterril, "that she's a gigantic beauty, and I believe I can espy" (again pointing his optic assistant towards the object of his discourse) "that there is no small portion of the vixen indelibly engraved on the face of this new votary of the Cyprian deity, who, I pronounce, has more of the angry Juno than the laughter loving Venus in her composition."

"I like her the better for having a little of the devil in her disposition," coughed out the emaciated Lord Orpington.—"Spirit is a very desirable trait in a mistress, but an insufferable *bore* in a wife."

“I do not comprehend,” replied the witty Lady Sparkle (who had attentively listened to the conversation); “what your Lordship means by that assertion; it appears to me a distinction without a difference.”

“Not at all; I am perfectly correct. A man may, with good effect, sometimes indulge himself with high-seasoned viands, and *sauce piquante*; but if he makes them his constant aliment, his taste would be vitiated, and his appetite destroyed. Our every day food, not to produce nausea, must be simple in its nature, plainly dressed, and good in its kind, to render it easy of digestion.”

“On my honour, I must allow, my Lord, you have given a definition of the subject I was not prepared to expect, having dished up a mighty pretty simile; but as you have so clearly explained what ingredients you think necessary in a wife, I wonder not, in an age like the present, when women no longer run
about

about the house like tame rabbits, but claim their rights, privileges, and immunities, that you have lived to your present age, without being able to procure a helpmate, insipid enough to preside over your Lordship's household."

"You are severe, Lady Sparkle, but I acknowledge your remarks are in part just; for my ideas of the duties of a married woman do not exactly coincide with the present system of unlimited freedom of mind and manners. Our great grandfathers managed those things better, when they chose their dames for the obsolete virtues of obedience, modesty, and religion!"

"Oh surprising! such moral documents from the mouth of the most dissipated voluptuary in the precincts of St. James's, who, like most other preachers, by his practice destroys the orthodoxy of the doctrine he attempts to inculcate!"

“I expect, Lady Sparkle, opinions so tramontane will expose me to the whole artillery of your wit, that you will hurl against them the pointed arrows of sarcasm, and level my arguments by the powerful force of ridicule.”

“Your Lordship is prepared to defy such weapons. Attic salt is not a seasoning to your *goût*.”

“That ought not to surprise your Ladyship, who has experienced its inefficacy to retain the affections of a husband! Few men, even in this enlightened era, would chuse a wife from the new school of philosophy, who has imbibed her ideas of feminine delicacy, from the writings of a Wollstonecraft, moral rectitude from the works of Godwin and Holcroft, propriety of conduct from Rousseau, and the tenets of her religion from the effusions of Voltaire and Hume.”

“Oh *barbare Sauvage*! how you volatilize your assertions against us poor women!

women ! But see, the *ballet* is going to begin, therefore I command silence ; promising to take an early opportunity of discussing the important question, which is most likely to render a man happy in his domestic circle—the ignorance or learning of the presiding deity.”

Lord Orpington, with an air of triumph, now left his antagonist, whom he thought subdued. At the commencement of the second act of *Semiramide*, he was seen to enter the box of Mrs. Lesley.

“ Behold ! ” cried Lady Sparkle, addressing her yawning auditors, “ there is that egregious prosing old bachelor gone to offer his horrid person and antediluvian notions, to the acceptance of *yon bona roba !* ”

“ She appears,” replied the effeminate Viscount Mildmay, “ to my affrighted vision, a perfect Brobdignian Glumdalclitch, who, I should expect, if I offended, would crush me into instant
F 4 annihilation.

annihilation betwixt her mighty finger and thumb."

"A very proper and natural death, Milly, for an insect," ironically retorted her Ladyship.

A loud laugh from the surrounding *ephemera* deranged the delicate nerves of the sensitive Peer, who was fain to have recourse to his *eau de luce* bottle; while the rueful faces, angry glances, and growling inuendoes of the musical *cognoscenti* were in vain directed toward their incorrigible tormenter, Lady Sparkle! whose clamorous mirth, and loud witticisms, increased in a ratio as she perceived the annoyance they gave to the lovers of sweet sounds, who were writhing, in extreme agony, at being precluded, by her mischief-loving propensities, from hearing a single note of their favourite *Soprano*!

Lord Orpington, having easily gained an introduction to Mrs. Stormer, was, or supposed he was, much enamoured of

of that lady, who rejoiced at the good fortune that now courted her acceptance, and the accomplishment of those ambitious views that were about to be realized, even at her first appearance in the world of fashion, by making so splendid a conquest, that would give her precedence in Cyprian etiquette, enabling her to take the lead of her very dear friend, the Baronet's *chere amie*, whom she determined to *cut*, as soon as her towering hopes were firmly established !

Barbara, who ever had an eye to her own interest, could not now be supposed to have lost sight of it by any personal predilection for his Lordship, who was a bachelor that had seen above half a century ; with a constitution shattered by the indulgences of a youth misspent, whose shrivelled skin hung loose on his fleshless bones, rendering him no bad representative of the chivalric Don Quixote.

Mrs. Stormer, therefore, had no inducement in listening to the overtures of his Lordship, but to rival in splendour the envied Mrs. Lesley, by her present aggrandizement and future independence. She resolved, for those weighty considerations, not to accept him without allowed a *charte blanche*. This she at last obtained, having lured her fashionable admirer to accede to all her terms, with the adroitness of a veteran negociator.

The treaty was formally signed and sealed. Among articles of less consequence appeared the following: that she should have settled upon her five hundred pounds annually for her natural life, for the due payment of which the family estate was made amenable; whatever children might be born, while she resided with Lord Orpington ("to whom related, or by whom begot") should, at his death, be respectively entitled to one thousand pounds each.—

Lastly,

Lastly, that she should be received into his residence, placed at the head of his table, as its mistress ; have a carriage, and a set of servants for her own particular use, and at her sole command.

As soon as the exulting Barbara had made her triumphal entry into Orpington House, Rumour blew her brazen trumpet ; lynx-eyed Scandal caught the sound, and wafted intelligence of the preposterous folly of her antiquated adorer, through the whole circle of fashion. The world wondered, his friends pitied, his relations raved, and Lady Sparkle laughed ; while she earnestly recommended his heirs to take out a statute of lunacy, for the temerity of his choice was a sufficient proof of his not being *compos mentis* !

Mrs. Stormer, placed in a situation so new, condemned to move in an unvarying routine of pompous parade, formal ceremony, and solemn grandeur,

was sinking rapidly into all the horrors of *ennui*.

She groaned under the ponderosity of consequence, the blandishments of power, and the splendour of wealth, that she knew not how to appreciate.

She had just sense enough to make herself completely miserable. Vanity had induced her to assume a place that she was conscious of filling most awkwardly. Had she doubted it, the sapient sneer of contempt, that curled the lip of the *maitre d'hotel* as he presided at the side-board; the hardly suppressed giggle that distorted the muscles of the party-coloured attendants, at her vulgar efforts to perform the honours of his Lordship's table; her constant mistakes, when attempting to name dishes, that she had never seen or heard of before, exposed her in the most ridiculous points of view!

These, and innumerable other mortifications, she was compelled to endure,
while

while initiating into the mysteries of her new station. Taken from her natural element, she floundered from side to side of the satin sofas, like a grampus left by the retiring ocean on the shores of Greenland. She paced the lofty drawing-room in moody melancholy, where, from the numerous engagements of his Lordship, she was left to count the tedious hours, and sigh alone; envying the more happy vassals, as she heard the sound of their exhilarating mirth arise in pealing laughter, from the servants' hall! Thus alternately irritable and inert, she shifted her position, but she could not fly from herself. Arrived at the ultimatum of her ambitious wishes, she had nothing more to hope. Possession brought its constant attendant, satiety; and in the silent solemnity, and pompous lassitude, of her present habitation, she had room for meditation even to madness.



CHAP. VII.

THERE were moments of solitude, when the compunctious whisperings of a guilty conscience could shake even the firm nerves of a Barbara Stormer ; compelled by memory to recognize her past conduct, the unnatural desertion of an only sister, the base ingratitude that had marked her treatment of a husband, who had generously raised her from a situation the most abject and debasing, to all the comforts, many of the luxuries of life. What had been his reward ? His paternal inheritance dissipated by the most luxurious extravagance, himself

self driven to despair, shame, poverty, and ruin.

She shuddered at the retrospect, resolving to remove this new and unwelcome monitor from her bosom, by remedying some of the consequences of her dereliction from virtue; she determined to allow her husband fifty pounds a year, which, added to his employment, she thought would be equal to all his wants, and immediately to make some inquiries after the long neglected Isabella.

When Lord Orpington had acceded to her demands of becoming an inmate of his house, he had informed her she must not think of inundating it with the *canaille* of her former associates, or the meretricious fair ones, to whom she had been lately introduced by the gay Mrs. Lesley; for he had many relations in the habits of visiting him, 'sober fathers of families, whose feelings he could not outrage, by associating them with such
improper

improper society. He recommended her to seek some well-educated woman, who, suffering from other's vices more than her own, might be induced to accept the situation of her friend and companion, by whose intercourse she would be amused, and her manners receive a polish.

These dictatorial rules for her conduct and actions, laid down by her lordly paramour, were listened to with a very ill grace by the proud and overbearing Barbara. She reflected that a power of re-action would return, which at present felt a stagnation, from the novelty of her situation; when use had familiarized her to overwhelming grandeur, and the awe-inspiring commands of titled verbosity, she should arouse from mortifying depression, exert her free agency, and carry all her points with her antiquated adorer, either by energetic violence, or hypocritical blandishments.

Revolving

Revolving upon the advice of Lord Orpington, in respect to a female companion, it occurred to Mrs. Stormer, the most politic system she could pursue, would be to raise her sister to that situation, whom gratitude for the honour would render docile to all her high behests, whom, if she found pretty, she might be enabled to provide for; and, if ignorant, could have her taught at some of those numerous seminaries that swarm around the environs of the metropolis, for the instruction of the rising generation! Of Isabella's being alive, and residing with the Curate of the village where they were born, she was not ignorant.

Lord Orpington having informed his Sultana that, after the birth-day, she must prepare to retire with him to the residence of his ancestors, from whence he should not return till Christmas, this decree hastened her determination in respect to Isabella; for an associate
was

was now become indispensably necessary, not being able to endure the idea of prowling alone through the embowering woods of Broomgrove Priory.

She was not deep read enough in modern romances to feel any pleasure in clambering over ruined battlements, to ascend southern or eastern towers, in search of marvellous adventures, to gratify insatiable curiosity. Barbara, bold and courageous, dared face any thing of *mortal* mould, but she was not equal to combating the terrors raised by the supposition of supernatural agency, by perambulating chapels at the witching hour of midnight, when yawning graves are said to yield up their ghostly tenants! Unlike the favourite heroines of the present era, she could not, unappalled, descend into the catacombs of the dead, most sacrilegiously disturbing the ashes of the illustrious progenitors of her noble lover, who mouldered in pomp amidst the tattered banners of blazoned escutcheons

cheons and armorial bearings ! With Hamlet, she could not exclaim, " Lead on, I'll follow !" as she fearlessly pursued, in spite of clashing chains, through the mazes of subterraneous passages, the flitting spectre of the Priory, till stopped by a massy grating, or a rising gust of wind extinguishing her lamp, left her in primeval darkness.

Mrs. Stormer acquainted Lord Orpington that she had a sister, eight years younger than herself, who had been educated by the Reverend Mr. Norman, with whom she now resided ; it was her intention, when he retired to his seat in Huntingdonshire, to make a visit to their native village, and, with his approbation, to bring Isabella to pass the summer at Broomgrove. This scheme having received his cheerful assent, Mrs. Stormer prepared to make a splendid display of her present consequence to her former associates in want and penury, by exhibiting herself to their
astonished

astonished sight in the extreme of fashion, the glitter of riches, and the pomp of equipage, to command at once respect, and excite envy.

She knew enough of the old-fashioned notions, early instilled into the heads of rustic dames, about honour, honesty, and virtue, to expect from them any amelioration of her dereliction from chastity, on the idea of her being the mistress of a Nobleman; convinced they would shock her more refined ears, by giving her the same *vulgar appellative* of reproachful insult, regardless whether she merited it by an intercourse with a Lord or his footman!

Well-assured of this, she took her measures accordingly, travelling post to the village of Lenthill in her own chariot, attended by a maid and footman hired for the occasion the day before she left London, who, she took care, should know nothing of their mistress, more than she chose they should repeat;
wisely

wisely determining to discharge them before she again resumed her station in Lord Orpington's family:—by a conduct so wary, she precluded all information of the present or the past, reaching the parties whom it was her interest to keep in ignorance.

After having slept at Morpeth, to recruit the fatigues of a journey performed by easy stages, Mrs. Stormer ordered herself to be driven to the village of Lenthill, which she entered in all the triumph of false consequence, attired in a scarlet riding-habit, richly embroidered with gold, and a hat loaded with nodding plumes, just ten years after she had quitted it in shoes fortified with hob-nails, and clothed in home-spun linsey, being firmly resolved to make her fortune ere she again revisited it. How little scrupulous she was as to the means of doing so, has been already shewn.

It was a bright summer morning in May; pure blew the air, blithe looked the

the passing plowman, as he doffed his hat to the fine carriage, and continued to whistle, "My Dolly was the fairest thing." As she advanced, the ruddy milk-maid left her pail, to drop awkward curtsies to the great lady; while, abashed at her own temerity, the crimson glow that mantled on her cheek made the *Circassian bloom*, that had long given a stationary colour to the face of Mrs. Stormer, appear pale on the comparison.

As she looked around, every dingle and bushy brake were objects familiar to her vision. Behind yon copse, at the end of the meadow, stood the small farm, once rented by her father; on the left, the receptacle of misery, the parish poor-house, that received her at his death! Turning from this disgusting object, while a faint blush suffused her countenance at the mortifying retrospections it revived, she beheld on the right the curling smoke arise from the well-remembered habitation of Farmer Grumble,

Grumble, where she had dragged on existence for seven tedious years, in a worse than Egyptian bondage;—shuddering at the recollection of the inflictions she had suffered, her eye was attracted by the fanes of the village church, gilded by the morning sun. It was reared upon an eminence, and terminated the prospect on the entrance of Lenthill; beside it, embosomed in trees,

“The village preacher’s modest mansion rose.”

Barbara, as she scrutinized the scene, found nothing altered in the appearance of her native place. Rustic simplicity still kept its station in this sequestered spot, which was too remote from London to have experienced the innovations of modern refinement. The capricious demon of fashion had not whispered to the humble inhabitants, “have a taste.” The furor of building had not reached this secluded dell, a century having here
made

made no alteration; the stone-built dwellings of the grandsires contained their unambitious descendants. No cottages *orné* here reared their fantastic forms, assuming, under a straw-thatched exterior, the semblance of rural simplicity, only to strike, with more wonder and admiration, the astonished gazer, when permitted to behold the *studied* ornaments, and elegant furniture, that decorate the interior of those temples, raised by her votaries, and dedicated to Vanity!

Mrs. Stormer's chaise and four soon stopped at the Bull's Head; and mine hostess, astounded at the superb appearance of her guest, was instantly at the door of the carriage, making a dozen curtsies while she tied on her white apron, desiring to know if her Ladyship would be pleased for to alight, which, having assisted her to do, conducted her to the best parlour, and taken orders for breakfast, elated with the honour of receiving

receiving such a fine lady, she began to call about her with Stentorian lungs—

“ John Hall, where be you? Always out of the way, or soaking your time in the kitchen. Come, rout out, I say, you idle drone, who lives upon me, a poor industrious bee. Go, I say, and see her Ladyship’s *carriage* and sarvants be properly *comidated*. And, Dick, make this here toast, and you, Dorothy, fly up stairs, and fetch my best imaged China, and the silver milk jug; while I goes for to skim off a little cream, and beat up a pat of butter for her Ladyship’s Honour’s tea. Oh! I had like to have forgot; and, Bet, do you clamber up in the hay-loft, and see whether the *ould* black hen *have* laid an egg, for I dares to say Madam be come from Lunnon, where she be used to have every thing nice and ginteel.”

The landlord, who had been some time a waiter at an hotel in Covent-Garden, before he married the buxom

widow of the Bull's Head, angry at being disturbed in the heat of a political dispute with the Exciseman, in which he had evidently the best of the argument, replied to his wife's mild remonstrances—

“What a fuss is here about preparing a breakfast for this new comer! She appears a dashing dame, a knock me down beauty, or I am much mistaken,” (winking significantly at his friend Gage). “I am up to a thing or two; all an't gold that glitters, or silver that shines. I am devilishly deceived if I have not seen this great lady before.—Take my word, Cicely, she's of the right sort, if I may judge by the roll of her twinklers, and her painted face.”

“I se wonder you an't ashamed of yourself, to say such *blasphemous* words, you idle sot, against such a comely person. I'm sartain she's dressed fine enough to be the potent Duchess of Northumberland herself; and I an't
sure

sure it is not her high Mightiness; but you mind nothing but guzzling, and talking treason, and *sauce* of your betters, while every thing of mine would go to rack and manger if I did not toil and moil, stir and bustle by night and by day, to supply my own wants."

While this sparring match took place between the pains-taking hostess and the slang host of the Bull's Head Hotel, the preparations for breakfast stood still. Mrs. Stormer rang her bell violently.

"Coming, coming, Madam, coming, my Lady," was vociferated at one time from half a dozen voices.

Mrs. Hall now entered with the tea-board, which being placed before her guest, she prepared to shew the profundity of her respect by attending herself.

Mrs. Stormer had been revolving, ever since her arrival, how she should best conduct the meeting with her

sister, whether it would be most proper to send for Isabella to the inn, or go herself to the Parsonage, wishing to be made acquainted with those circumstances of her life that had occurred since she left Lenthill. Well remembering the character for loquacity, and a love of gossiping, which the hostess had ever been famous for, she began some leading questions, which were answered with avidity.

She soon, through the information of her garrulous attendant, was informed of every thing that had happened to Isabella since her birth. In the course of her narrative, she had frequently occasion to mention Barbara, which she did with little ceremony, and less delicacy. From this her auditor gathered, that the inhabitants of Lenthill were better informed of many parts of her story, than she wished. Had this circumstance been known sooner, it is more

more than probable they would not have been honoured with the present visit. But she was now embarked, and must go on, convinced that the appearance of riches and consequence, aided by a commanding effrontery, would subjugate the servile, and awe the bold into silence. She took her measures accordingly; ordering her woman to bring her writing-case, she sat down to the arduous task of fabricating a note to the Reverend Mr. Norman. This employment her erudition was very unequal to the performing, for she had never been taught to write till after she became Mrs. Stornier. At that period, either too old, too indolent, or too careless, her orthography was shocking, and her hieroglyphics not to be deciphered without a key.

Mrs. Hall, who, though she did not chuse to allow it, had been somewhat startled at what her husband had advanced, was an attentive observer to every look of her guest, while she waited at

the breakfast-table. She now thought, like him, that the features of the lady were familiar to her; but where, or when she had seen them, she could not recollect. Her inquiries about Isabella Nelson, and several other established inhabitants of Lenthill, brought conviction to her mind, that Jacob was right in his conjectures, and it was not the first time they had met.

Brimful of doubt and curiosity, she returned to the kitchen, to solicit the assistance of her good man toward developing the secret history of the Madam in her parlour (for she had already dropped the title of Ladyship). Cicely knew him to be a shrewd fellow, who, to credit his own assertion, was a knowing one, up to a thing or two, a rum kiddy, that could gammon the deep ones!

By him she expected to have her surmises cleared up; but she was obliged to delay her communications, for she found him encircled by the politicians of Lenthill,

hill, who were all vociferating at once on their favourite subject, too eager to convince their opponents to allow a pause, and too clamorous for even the shrill pipes of Cicely to make herself heard. She must therefore perforce wait till they had settled the more important affairs of the nation ! Each of the delegates of the village convention had a scheme to propose, that if adopted, would infallibly amend individuals, and reform the whole.

Dick Dip, the tallow-chandler, *pur-tested* we were shamefully kept in the *dark* by the great men in office ; but he could *illuminate* the back stairs in a manner so brilliant, that should throw a *light* on the causes which occasioned provisions to rise, and the stocks to fall, that when once known, would make the *flames* of discontent rage so furiously, all the water in Old Thames would not be able to *extinguish* them.

He was answered by Frank Froth, the barber, who ayowed the Minister was as keen as a razor, had lathered us over with fine speeches, blinded us with *Naples soap*, and then shaved off our liberty and property as clean as a whistle! A general bankruptcy hung over us by a *single hair*; that in this dreadful period he thanked God his conscience was as *smooth* as a *hone*, having never took an Election bribe, but he had scraped together with cutting and spinning a *small crop*, that though he could not, like the great *haritor* Cicero, retire to his *Tusculum willa*, when his country was in danger, he had a little *wig-ream*, that was once his grandmother's, that he could dress up snugly to protect his head from the coming storm.

George Gage, an Exciseman, begged leave to assure the two honourable members that had last spoken, who he was sorry to perceive were alarmists without cause, discontented without reason, and

oppositionists

oppositionists without judgment, that the present Minister was the wisest, justest, and best that had ever guided the vessel of the State; that Sir Robert Walpole was a coward to him, who was frightened at extending the Excise laws; but our present ruler feared not when the public good was concerned, for he had gauged the resources of the kingdom to a pot of ale, and, with unequalled vigilance, had ascertained the private property of each individual to the last guinea; so that, while one remained in their pockets, he will be at no loss from whence to drain his supplies: "therefore I take upon me to assure the gentleman in my eye, that his little wigwam, and Alnwick Castle, under such a Heaven-born Minister, are equally secure!"

This eulogium from the Treasury Bench, brought up Mr. Edward Engross, Clerk, Secretary, and Factorum to the Right Worshipful Mr. Justice Shark. He was

a profound thinker, a sanguine speculatist, and a violent declaimer; the oracle of the Saturday's night club, and the Brissot of the faction! He fulminated his anathemas against the present men in power, swore England must soon lose her place among the nations of the earth, if his plan for a new Administration was not directly adopted. It went to a systematic change of men and measures, which could alone save her from inevitable destruction. "I say no partial cutting away the branches will do; the axe must be laid to the root of the tree."

He was just called to order by Mr. Gage, when Mr. Scalp, the village apothecary, entered in haste.

"He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
"And carries fate and physic in his eye."

This gentleman was for coercion; his was the Robespierian code of laws; he
4 denounced

denounced the man, who, with English gold, subsidized German despots, and purchased rotten boroughs. These were the avowed causes which had sapped our once vigorous Constitution; that, if the diseased members were amputated by a skilful professor, there might be yet time to perform a radical cure; but if the *gangrene* was not immediately stopped, a mortification would ensue; and the body politic being in a state of corruption, death and destruction must be the consequences!

Jacob, who always gave his opinion last, out of politeness to his guests, was about to rise; when his impatient dame, who could wait no longer, thought of a scheme to break up the conclave, knowing, from past experience, if mine host of the Bull's Head once mounted his favourite hobby, of declaiming against Continental wars, standing armies, and the balance of power in Europe, that it

G 6

would

would be impossible to stop him till he came to the end of his career. To prevent this, Cicely rushed amongst the Select Committee, exclaiming, at the top of her voice—
“Frank Froth, you are wanted this moment to shave the head of poor mad Tom, the tailor, who lost his wits by studying how to pay the National Debt, instead of working to discharge his own! Dick Dip, your apprentice has been here, to say you must come home, and put the candles to cool; and you, George Gage, who be so loyal, had best go along with ’en, to see the King be not cheated of his duty! His Worship, the Justice, desires Mr. Engross will come with all speed, and make out a pass for the poor soldier’s wife, who was brought to bed of twins the night afore last, in Farmer Grumble’s barn; who’s *afeard*, if she be’nt moved directly, she will die there, and then the parish must bury her! And as to you, Dr. Scalp,
Dame

Dame Gurton *have* been here; and wonders as how you could think to leave her daughter in labour, to come and preach at the Bull's Head; for she saw you through *winder*, holding forth about the State, and leaving the subjects to perish!"

This address effectually answered the intent, and sent each of these students for the good of the nation to their respective employments.

here, to say you must come home, and put the candles to cool; and you, George Gage, who be so loyal, had best go along with en, to see the King be not cheated of his duty! His Worship, the Justice, desires Mr. Engross, will come with all speed, and make out a pass for the poor soldier's wife, who was brought to bed of twins the night afore last, in Farmer Grumble's barn; who's afraid, if she be not moved directly, she will die there, and then the parish must bury her! And as to you, Dr. Scalp, Dame

CHAP. VII.

CICELY, having given herself all due credit for ridding the house so adroitly of the political phalanx, called upon Jacob to exert his so often boasted sagacity, to develop who was their parlour guest, and what was her business at Lenthill; acknowledging, with all due submission, that she believed his conjectures were right, and she was only an old acquaintance new dressed. Before her *knowing* husband had time to plan a scheme to solve the enigma, they were called upon to act; for their Reverend Pastor entered the kitchen, attended

attended by Isabella, pale and trembling. On inquiring for the lady who arrived that morning, the officious landlord was ready to usher them into her presence, hoping to gather something from their first salutation, that might ease the pangs of curiosity. Mr. Norman defeated this intention; for, when shewn the room, he opened the door himself, and immediately closed it after him.

Mrs. Stormer, having made many ineffectual efforts to produce a letter to Mr. Norman, that should mislead him respecting her present situation, and yet impress him with a proper idea of her consequence, at last succeeded in pleasing herself; and while the political disputants were most clamorous, it had been sent to the Parsonage by her own footman. As a precious *morceau* of erudition, we present it to our readers in *puris naturalibus*, without any comment.

“ REVRUND

“REVRUND SUR,

“ Perhaps you ma'nt know hu
eye be by my presant titall; there-
fore eye must dissend to the mortifficasion
of hexplaning my name, which was once
Barbara Nelson, it were the missfortin
of my life to live seven ears of it with
them orrid beastes, Farmer and Dame
Grumbel, who used me worser than a
Gue or a Turkish slave, when my bond-
age were ended, eye determend to make
my fortin by going to Lunnon, an
begon my gurney gust ten ears ago, and
think God my hexerteons for hinde-
pandence an appines as bin krownd
with complet suckses, for I soon married
a ritch man, burred im, and all my
childrin, and am now a widdo, with a
good gointur, and plenty of mony in
the *funs* beside, keep my own karridge,
have a helligant cottidge horney at
Blakheath,

Blakheath, my box at the uproar, an eye
always sociate with people of *Noability*,
onner, or consequence, the motif of my
troubling you with this haccount of my
sittuashon is my aving eared that my
alf sistur, Isabella, after aveing left the
village simminare, in which she was
brote hup, was livin in your fammiley;
I therfur flatturd myself she mite ave
bin so hedicated as not to make me
hasshamid of hintroducing her to gintil
cumpany, i ave takin the fatteague of a
gurney to this malloncolly plase to
gudge for myself were she be vorthy of
the onner of my purtexion, and will not
disgrase me by taulkin vulgar, witch is
quiet shockin to thos usid to the furst
companney, if thirfur on seein hur I
shuld take a fansy to the pure thing, an
you giv hur a good carratter, I mene to
take hur away with me, an ave hur cum-
plished for my cumpannion, an if she
studdys to plese me, I may now day

mak

mak hur my airess. I ham in harnest
hexpectashon of your hanswer,

“Revrund Sur,

“Your hobedent umble sarvent,

“BARBARA STORMER.”

Lenthill Hodel,

Fryday morn.

When Mr. Norman received this curious epistle, which took him some time to decipher, he read it aloud to his wife, and begged her advice how to act; the account Barbara gave of herself being so very different from that Mrs. Hunt had wrote to her friends, which said that her husband was still in existence, and she lived in a state of open adultery with Lord Orpington. For Isabella, who had conducted herself with the utmost propriety, this worthy couple felt the highest esteem; and trembled at the thoughts of what might be her fate, if she was,
with

with a mind uninstructed in worldly wisdom, committed to the guidance of so improper a personage as her sister.

These good people without guile, who "walked humbly with their God," had minds as innocent, and hearts as pure as our first parents in Paradise, before they were tempted to purchase knowledge, at the expence of future misery to their descendants. These primitive Christians knew not what atrocities human kind is capable of committing, when deterred by no dread of future punishment, which they have persuaded themselves is a religious fable to "keep the dull vulgar in awe." What therefore is to preclude such beings from throwing down those fences raised by propriety, to guard modest diffidence from the attacks of vice? The sceptic, who doubts the existence of a God, will not be stopped in his career of sensual enjoyment, or precluded from the indulgence of pleasure.

sure, or the gratification of illicit passion, by the fear of worldly censure!

It could not enter the honest hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Norman, that Mrs. Stormer, though the slave of vanity, having wandered into the flowery mazes of pleasure, could be so totally abandoned as to wish her sister to follow her example. The result of their deliberations was to acquaint Isabella with the contents of Barbara's letter.

She being called, it was given her. While perusing the scrawl, her bosom was agitated by various conflicts—joy and affection at being claimed by so near a relation, whom she longed, with all the enthusiastic ardour of unadulterated tenderness, to embrace. These effusions were checked by shame for the writer, as her eye glanced over the pompous vulgar epistle. A sensation, new to herself, heaved her breast, and rushed in currents through her heart, suffusing her neck and face with a bright ver-

million. This stranger to her feelings was *pride*, aroused by the implied doubts as to her being a proper companion for a sister, who, if fame did not scandalize her, was a woman who must be too highly honoured by the association of virtuous poverty!

Isabella shrank from being a dependant on the bounty of one who vaunted of her wealth and consequence, maugre the nefarious means by which they had been acquired. She felt mortified at the idea of receiving a favour from a person whose offers of protection were evidently made with so high a sense of her own importance, conveyed in a language composed of disgusting vulgarity, depressing condescension, and insolent *hauteur*!

While these ideas passed rapidly through her brain, Mr. Norman, who perceived the struggle she endured, desired to know what were her intentions, that he might communicate them

to

to Mrs. Stormer. She modestly solicited his advice, observing that she feared to decide on her own weak judgment, in a case of so much importance to her future existence. Supposing her sister's situation to be what she had described, her first wish would be to reside with her, and prove, by every attention, and her love and gratitude; but, on the contrary, if she was a disciple of vice, and living in avowed profligacy with Lord Orpington, her husband being still in existence, she should wish to forget she had such a relation; preferring the hardest labour, the meanest apparel, and the coarsest fare, to partaking of ease, splendour, and opulence, acquired by means so repugnant to the honourable principles, his condescending goodness had taken such pains to inculcate on her mind.

He commended the propriety of her sentiments, but said he was very tenacious of his giving his opinion upon a subject on which
her

her future establishment in life appeared to depend. It behoved her to reflect, that her sister, having no other relative, had promised, if she came to reside with her, to leave her sole heiress to her property. It was true, a story quite different to the one her letter told, had been promulgated through the village; but it might be the fabrication of an enemy, envious of her exaltation. At all events, there was now no time for ascertaining the fact, as she must come to a prompt decision; Mrs. Stormer was waiting in expectation of her answer, who, by taking such a long journey, and making offers that the world would denominate generous, had shewn a regard for her welfare, and a wish to make her partake of those advantages, the value of which she herself seemed fully to understand, and duly appreciate.

Headed, "Whatever may be the situation she has chosen, she cannot be so depraved as not to protect her sister from

from insult, and instruct her how to shun those rocks that wrecked her peace and happiness; for such, you may be assured, must be her sensations, however she may attempt to cover them with flowers, therefore your honour will at least be safe;—and, if convinced that your residence with her is improper, instantly leave her, my poor child, and return to a family, whom your mild manners, and modest merit, have taught to love and esteem you; whose doors shall be ever open for your reception. You, I am convinced, will not be deterred from acting right by the fear of combating labour and poverty; you have a strong intelligent mind; it has had no adventitious embellishments, though well cultivated, and thick sown with integrity, honour, and religion. These, I trust, have taken root, and are become a part of the soil; they will enable you to resist any attempts made against your innocence! You will not lose the hope
promised

promised to the just in another and a better world, for the seductive allurement and fascinating blandishments held out to tempt you to the enjoyments of this, by the votaries of libertinism.

This impressive and well-meant lecture from her master, decided Isabella's judgment as to the conduct she ought to pursue: it was to go directly to her sister, in whose arms she ardently longed to be folded, thank her for her kind intentions; and if, on their meeting, she still continued to wish it, she resolved on accompanying her to London.

The unassuming pastor gladdened the heart of his handmaid by saying that he would walk with her to Mrs. Storham; rightly supposing he could form some opinion of that lady by her conversation, and impress on her mind, by what he meant to impart, an advantageous predilection in favour of Isabella's suit. When the parlour door was closed, opposite to which he sat basking in a plenitude

plenitude of gorgeous finery the athletic Barbara, at their entrance, she advanced to the middle of the room ; the contrast was inimitable, the “ *tout ensemble*” worthy to be delineated by the charming pencil of a Bunbury. Opposed to her scarlet and gold, her feathers and rouge, stood the humble expounder of the Gospel.— His person tall and slender, enveloped in a coat that once was black, but which age, aided by the cleanliness of constant brushing, had long since shorn of its knap ; being deprived of its original hue, it now assumed the dingy colour of a London sparrow ! His face a perfect oval ; his meek eyes beamed with heavenly philanthropy ; his thin brown hair, sprinkled with a silver grey, was divided on the top of his head, and shaded his open forehead. In the background was seen the delicate, agitated form of Isabella, clothed in a sprigged cotton gown, snow-white apron and handkerchief, a small peasant’s cap, that hardly
confined

confined the luxurious ringlets of her flaxen hair: several of them, having escaped from bondage, wantoned on her blushing cheek. A straw bonnet, tied on with lilach strings, completed the dress of this village maid; the mild effulgence of whose blue eyes never failed to gain for her an interest in the hearts of her beholders.

Mr. Norman, on his first glance of Mrs. Stormer, such as we have delineated her, started with involuntary disgust, and recoiled back a few paces; but naturally polite, he soon recovered himself, and took the trembling hand of Isabella; she shrank dismayed with affright from the bold form and scrutinizing glances of Barbara, whom he thus addressed:—

“ Madam, in consequence of your letter, I have the pleasure to present you a sister worthy your affections, whose heart is replete with those virtues that add consequence to riches, and dignify

nify even poverty! After this asseveration, I need not add that no shame can possibly attach to her protector; her mind has not been left uncultivated; you will find her capable of conducting herself properly in any company, to whom you may wish to introduce her. Though educated to fill the middle rank of life, she has capabilities that will not disgrace a higher sphere."

While he spoke, Barbara felt awed by his impressive manner, and his words sank deep; for conscience whispered that they were emphatically meant to reflect upon her inflated letter. She had seen enough of Isabella to be convinced that, when ornamented by the hand of fashion, she would be a very lovely girl, and a desirable object to accompany her to public places. She therefore began to play off her whole stock of hypocrisy, embraced her sister with much seeming affection, wrung out a few crocodile tears of joy, at finding her so much improved, and

and of gratitude to her worthy protectors for all their attentions, expressing how much pleasure it afforded her to reflect that Isabella, having received a religious education, would never be tempted to wander from the paths of virtue, like those who “are without hope!”

She performed her part so well, that she convinced the credulous, innocent Isabella that all the stories related of her were false, and that she was as good as kind. Barbara, though she could not be said, by the semblance of piety and virtue, to have equally imposed upon Mr. Norman, by totally altering the bad opinion he had formed on a first view of that lady, it was rather staggered by her subsequent behaviour. This good man, lenient to the frailties of erring mortals, always let mercy guide the rod of reproof. He therefore now tried to behold Mrs. Stormer in the light he *wished* her to appear. After some further conversation,

he rose to depart, again recommending Isabella to her care and protection, who, it was agreed, should be ready to accompany her sister on the morrow. She was to return to the Parsonage, to pack her small wardrobe; and then come back to dine with Mrs. Stormer, who expressed a desire to walk through her native fields.



CHAP. VIII.

BARBARA, to gratify her vanity, could occasionally be profuse to excess. This she denominated generosity; and having talked of gratitude to Mr. Norman till she had persuaded herself she really

really felt it, arose, and assuming what she thought a graceful attitude, advanced to that gentleman, taking from her finger a fancy ring of some value, an urn of diamonds set on blue enamel, which she begged he would do her the honour of wearing, as a token of her respect, and a small compensation for his care of Isabella.

Her astonished visiter politely thanked her for the favour she intended him, while he modestly, but decidedly, refused to receive so valuable a present. She continued to press his acceptance of the ring, mortified in the extreme that a poor country Curate, rich only in good works, should be too high-spirited to receive a gift that was meant to free her from a sense of obligation.

While he was receding, and she advancing, they arrived near the door, when a loud crash was instantly followed by the Parson's being precipitated with violence into the extended arms of

Mrs. Stormer. They both fell prone on the floor, where she lay pressed down like a collar of brawn by the weight of many heavy bodies. That lady did not immediately recover from the concussion of her fall to a sense of her situation; but when she did, her loud and sonorous screams for assistance, her mouth being in close contact with the unlucky preacher's right ear, so impaired that organ, it did not recover its tone for many months!

Nor were her attempts to free herself from durance less active; having liberated her hands, by one powerful exertion, she made a lapse in propriety; forgetting the character of softness she had to support, she plied them with effect on her oppressors, still using to express her angry threats, the ill-fated Mr. Norman as a speaking trumpet! Her random blows fell thick and fast, on a female head that rested on his left shoulder, whose doleful yells, piercing through
that

that ear, totally deprived him of sense, and he lay a "*caput mortuum*" on the agitated bosom of the Amazonian Barbara ; who enriched herself with the spoils of her enemy, grasping in her hand the cap, roll, and no small portion of the hair of the secret-loving Cicely, for it was no other that had occasioned this uproarious confusion. But as it would be indecorous to leave them "*en masse*" on the sanded floor of the Bull's Head, after having relieved them from so degrading a situation, resuscitating the dead, and assisting the mangled, we will, with our usual precision, account for the cause of this laughter-moving scene.

Isabella, having turned to the window, to hide the tears of regret that flowed involuntarily at the thought of leaving the placid dwelling of the good Curate, to mix with the inhabitants of a world to whose manners she was perfectly a stranger, escaped the misfortune that had befallen her friends. Her cries for assistance soon brought her sister's

servants, and, by their united endeavours, the prostrate were raised, and aid given to the vanquished. Mine hostess was carried off the field of battle, to use Jacob's phrase, with her glims closed; he observing, she had been down upon Madam's *tibby*, who was *full of fight*, up to the *go*, and had given poor Cicely her *gruel*! Forlorn, indeed, looked the bustling landlady; her head bare, no handkerchief covered her capacious breastworks, that bore the appearance of an ensanguined plain, by the copious streams of blood that flowed from her olfactory vessels. To this were added two black eyes, her cheeks exhibiting ten stripes, indented by the ferocious talons of the conquering Barbara, that at once proclaimed her triumph, and Cicely's discomfiture.

Mrs. Stormer had not totally escaped the ravages of war, while she dealt destruction on her prostrate foe. Her habit had been rolled in the sand; the feathers,

feathers, that in the morning nodded so proudly, were broke to pieces; the well-powdered *chignon*, by her unusual exertions, had escaped from its fastening, and now flowed over the shoulder of the Curate. He had, by the earnest endeavours of the terrified Isabella, been restored to life, but not to a sense of thinking; for the *pia mater* appeared to have suffered such a revulsion from the united clamour of Barbara and Cicely, that to restore it to its equilibrium required attention, time, and quiet. To find these he was attended to the Parsonage by his blooming handmaid, who was shocked and ashamed at the violent ebullitions of passion, that her sister had evinced for what might have happened from a mere accident.

This was not exactly the case; for no sooner did Cicely see Mr. Norman and Isabella enter the parlour, than she proposed to Jacob the scheme of listening. To this he readily assented, whose

own wish, for information relative to their guest, was become rather painful, having in vain attempted to gain it through the common road of communication, her servants, who either did not know, or would not impeach their mistress. The door, which happened to be old and full of cracks, amply gratified at the same time their eyes and ears; and they were soon convinced that Mrs. Stormer was the identical Barbara Nelson, whose defalcation from virtue had been soloudly announced by rumour.

No sooner was Cicely assured of this, than, eager to spread the intelligence, she ran into the kitchen to proclaim the wonderful tidings to Dorothy, Bet, Tom Ostler, and even little Dick; who all at once exclaimed—

“Laud ha marcy, beshure it cannot be; but vor the love of God, let's go and get a peep at the brazen baggage, who be come here a purpose to nose us with her finery.”

They ~

They now all crowded at the outside of the parlour, shoving and elbowing to get nearer the scene of action, till Tom Ostler, a ponderous fellow, about eighteen stone weight, by dint of compressing those who barred his passage, that were compelled to suffer his buffets in silence, for fear of being discovered, reached the goal; longing for a view of the metamorphosed Barbara, he clambered up, and hung on the crazy door to look over it; when, horrible to relate, the rusty hinges gave way, and precipitated the whole assembled group into the room; they fell pell-mell on the astonished Parson and exasperated Barbara, who, having recovered her perception, clearly saw how it had happened, and instantly determined to have her revenge on the landlady, on whose insolent curiosity she laid the whole blame of the mischances of the morning! Seeing therefore her little tight head bobbing up on the left shoulder of Mr. Norman, she

she let the whole weight of her blows fall on the face of the devoted hostess.

Quiet being in some measure restored, and Mrs. Stormer, by the assistance of her woman, re-attired, though obliged to content herself with an unplumed crest, that being totally demolished, she sent for Jacob, who came leering into the room with a countenance that at once expressed contrition and familiarity. She had an intuitive quickness of ideas, that in an emergency stood her friend, instructing her how she ought to act. Convinced that she was discovered, she determined to avow herself, and carry it with a high hand: thus addressing the crest-fallen Jacob, who felt awed into humble submission under her haughty frown.

“ Well, Mr. Hall, I hope you have gratified your wish of knowing who I am, by practising a system that does not redound much to your credit as a
master

master of an inn, who should protect his guests from insolent treatment, instead of being the first to shew the way to others ; but I am willing to believe you became a listener at the instigation of your foolish wife. I hope she has received a lesson that will deter her in future from wishing to interfere with business in which she can have no concern."

" I beg your pardon, Madam, for what has happened ; certain sure it was Cicely's plot, and a cross-grained one it has proved to her ; but as you have done her over so *neatly*, I hope you'll shake hands, forget, and forgive ; you must own that she has been cruelly punished, having meant no harm, only wishing to know if you and she were not old friends."

" That is to say, she would have been very glad to have claimed acquaintance with the rich Mrs. Stormer, who would have felt no conscience in driving

driving from her door Barbara Nelson, had she returned hither poor and unfortunate. I have seen the world, Mr. Jacob Hall, and value it, and her, accordingly ! Tell your wife I am sorry I demeaned myself so far as to strike her. I have nothing further to say on that subject, but to order you to prepare as good a dinner as this place will afford, against the return of my sister ; whom I mean to take from hence, and share with her that fortune which it has pleased Providence to confer upon my honest endeavours."

In one little hour from the dropping of the door, the whole inhabitants of Lenthill and its environs were fully acquainted with the fatal catastrophe of the tragic, comic, farcical, burlesque representation that had been that morning performed in the parlour of the Bull's Head ; forgetting not to explain, that the principal actress was the *ci-devant* Barbara Nelson, who, born in a hovel,

hovel, educated in a workhouse, apprenticed by the parish, and nurtured in the piggery of Farmer Grumble, was now returned, to the astonishment of a few, and the envy of the many, a “fine lady all covered with jewels and gold!”

This intelligence made a holiday at Lenthill; the matrons left their knitting, and the damsels their spinning-wheels, and gathered in gossiping parties, to comment on the prodigal's, though not the penitent's return. The lasses strolled around the house to catch a glimpse of this female Whittington, who had made her fortune by her travels; deprecating her luck, and wishing themselves in her place, while they pretended to arraign the *means* by which they were resolved to believe her splendor had been acquired! The men, not less desirous to behold their contemporary in the hay-fields assuming a new character, quitted the scythe, the harrow, and the flail,
to

to crowd the kitchen of Measter Hall, and hear all about Bab Nelson. Such was the power of curiosity, that it is on record on that memorable day, Jacob drew a whole cask of his home-brewed stout.

The ringers hearing the tale, determined to do honour to their townswoman, with whom most of the younger ones had, in times past, had many a romping bout. Isabella with a heavy heart was returning to her sister, when the bells saluted her ears with a merry peal, and she found the doors of the cottages lined as she passed with the young, old, and decrepit, attired in their Sunday suits; it appeared a village jubilee. Their eyes glanced looks of inquiry, on their brow sat eager expectation; they could not with more impatience have waited for a view of our most gracious Queen herself.

No

No sooner did the abashed Isabella appear in sight, than they all crowded around her. One exclaimed, "I wish you joy, Miss Nelson :"—"It is a good thing," said another, "to have our friends born before us ;" while a third broke forth with, "Well, to be sure, who would have thought it ! I find your sister Bab is returned a fine Madam, and you, belike, when you have been the *same road*, will come back one likewise !"

"I hope not," quoth a grey-headed dame, who had seen better days, and was leaning over the hatch of her door. "Barbara had no person to instruct her properly ; by the miserly Grumbles she was badly fed, and worse taught ; never having the fear of God before her eyes, her only dread was poverty ; and that's an evil it seems she has found the way to avoid. Isabella will not have her excuse ; decently and tenderly brought up by my good friend, the matron, and having since had the
advantage

advantage of being informed of her religious duties by our pious Parson, she must not expect mercy, if she follows bad ways. Forget not, my poor child, that the bread procured by honesty, will eat far sweeter than the greatest dainties, with a sick conscience."

Isabella, whose spirit had rose at the sarcastic taunts of her young companions, was melted into tears of gratitude, for the kind and friendly advice inculcated by the lessons of her hoary monitor; whom, embracing, she assured they would ever hold a place in her memory, and it should be her endeavour to conduct herself according to such precepts. After several detentions of the same nature, she was allowed to proceed, and arrived at the inn just as the dinner was placed on the table.

Isabella informed her sister that the whole parish was assembled in hopes of seeing her, and that she had been
detained

detained by their inquiries ;—she would not vex her by renumerating their various ill-natured remarks. This intelligence determined Barbara that she would impress them with a high opinion of her riches, and an exalted sense of her generosity ;—she sent, therefore, for the now obsequious landlord, who bowed profoundly at every pause of her orders, telling him that she desired a good and plentiful supper might be dressed, to be diluted with as much ale and punch as they could drink before twelve o'clock, for as many of the villagers and their neighbours as were willing to partake of her bounty ; excepting and providing against Farmer Grumble and his dame, for both of whom she felt a mortal antipathy.

This Jacob promised to set about directly ; the time being too short for a formal invitation, he proposed to send the Beadle with his bell to announce her good Ladyship's kind intentions ! This idea met her entire

entire approbation, because it would add to the publicity she courted, and the bustle she loved. Having sent a couple of guineas to the ringers, and ordered her carriage for an airing, or rather an exhibition, wishing to shew herself to the gaping multitude in all her glory ; she dismissed the host, who rejoiced at the idea of touching the *bit*, while she amused herself with giving instruction to Isabella how she was to deport herself when introduced to people of fashion !

The chariot drawing up to the door, the sisters, attended by Jacob, attempting to take their places, found it surrounded by rosy-checked damsels, who stared, simpered, and giggled ; and smock-frocked swains, who saluted Mrs. Stormer (the Beadle having by this time announced her intention of giving them a merry meeting) with three cheers, that made the welkin ring ; while that lady, who took all in
good

good part, was put into a most complacent humour, and nodded around her very graciously.

Before the carriage wheels were out of sight, the assembled multitude crowded together to give their opinion of their old acquaintance, Bab. Among the other idlers were the political junto. Froth observed that she was well *dressed*; Dip, that her eyes shone as bright as *wax*; Gage swore, though he was one of the honestest Officers of his Majesty's revenue, he feared he might be tempted to wink at the contraband doings of such a pretty *Smuggler*; whilst Scalp declared upon his honour her smiles were quite *balsamic*, and her society must ever act as a *cordial restorative*! Mr. Edward Engross vowed she was a most delicious divine creature, with whom he absolutely resolved to be soon better acquainted; concluding by desiring Jacob that he would introduce him to pay his respects.

While this conversation was passing at the Bull's Head, the occasion of it was taking a circuitous ride of some miles around that common, and through those lanes, where hungry, cold, and ragged, she had oftentimes drove the sheep, cows, and horses of the flinty-hearted Grumble ! She reviewed those scenes of her past humiliation with a heart that proudly throbbed, exulting at the triumph her present riches gave her over those by whom she had formerly been oppressed, and mal-treated.

Barbara was not one of that number who bear their honours meekly ; she felt no repugnance at exhibiting the trappings of vice, and claiming consequence from a situation, that a more diffident sinner would have shrank from assuming, conscious of the means by which it was acquired. The ring intended for Mr. Norman, which had been lost in the scuffle of the morning, was found, and returned to Mrs. Stormer, just before she got into the carriage, who

who now expressed her intention of stopping at the Parsonage, to try once more her powers of oratory, to induce the Curate to accept the glittering gift.

When they alighted, and were shewn into the neat wainscoted parlour, and saw the modest mistress of the mansion surrounded by a beauteous offspring, clad in the simplest habiliments, on whose cheeks bloomed the roseate hue of health, while cheerfulness and content animated their lovely countenances, Barbara felt abashed and confounded; the assumed air of self-consequence, and bold unblushing front with which she had entered this abode of innocence and peace, were annihilated by the mild though penetrating glances, that were directed to her from the eyes of Mrs. Norman, who appeared to read her inmost thoughts.

Her heart shrunk from this scruti-
VOL. I. I nizing

nizing investigation ; her blood seemed stagnate, cold damps bedewed her forehead, and she respired with difficulty ! She felt, for the first time, the compunctious visitings of conscience, the pangs of self-reproach—sensations so new, to which she had been hitherto a stranger, made her think herself dying ; pallid and trembling, she sunk into a chair ; every thing was done to restore her. Her sister supposed she was only overcome by the heat ; when a little re-assured, she made an attempt to explain the occasion of her visit, re-urging her suit, which was again rejected. Mrs. Norman, who perceived the refusal of her husband appeared really to distress and mortify her, added her entreaties to those of Mrs. Stormer, to prevail on him to accept the well-intentioned *douceur*. They at last succeeded, to the great joy of the donor.

Tea was brought in, of which they partook, when Isabella, who was to leave

leave the place early in the morning, took an affectionate leave of the worthy family, to whose bosoms she was alternately folded, while almost suffocated by tears and sobs. After receiving from Mr. Norman a most impressive benediction, she departed with her sister, followed by the good wishes of the sorrowing group.

On their ascending the carriage, they found it environed by an accumulated crowd, who, taking out the horses, insisted on drawing them back to the inn! In vain Mr. Norman remonstrated against such improper behaviour; the fumes of Jacob's ale gave them courage to oppose the exhortations even of their revered pastor, and they flew off with the chariot, followed by the acclamations of the populace! This was the notoriety that Barbara loved; it assisted to raise her spirits, and quiet those unwelcome qualms that had depressed her even to fainting, while at the Parsonage.



CHAP. IX.

ISABELLA, to whom such a scene was perfectly novel, was much alarmed; but they soon arrived in safety at the house which has made so conspicuous a figure in our village annals! From the vehicle they were handed with much adulation, and many high-flown compliments, by Mr. Edward Engross; who being the beau and oracle of the place, and rather a good-looking young man, received a curtsy and thanks from Mrs. Stormer for his polite attentions. On inquiring of Jacob who he was, she received for answer, that he was a gentleman

gentleman of the law that was *mortal larned*, and very-clever! She immediately, on hearing this intelligence, sent her compliments, desiring the favour of his company to supper.

This request was directly complied with, and the blotter of sheepskin made his bow with the easy *nonchalance* of a Bond-Street loungee! Having taken his seat next to Mrs. Stormer, he resolved to impress her with a proper opinion of his versatile knowledge, for which purpose he descanted volubly, and spoke decidedly upon all subjects; a few of which he knew superficially, of others nothing at all! A woman of sense and education would have at once perceived that he was an ignorant, conceited, egregious coxcomb, not so Mrs. Stormer: his acquirements were just suited to her abilities, who estimated them accordingly, and before they parted, she had set him down as a superlative promising young man, whose

I 3 wondrous

wondrous talents ought not to be buried among musty parchments, or his handsome person bent into a curve over the brown desk of the Worshipful Mr. Justice Shark; while he swore by Mount Ida, that in her person were combined all the attractions of the contending deities; of course

The apple had not fallen to Venus share,
Had he been Paris, and his Stormer there.

This was a sort of gross flattery calculated to suit the meridian of her taste, and gratify her personal vanity. The mild manners and rigid notions of propriety Lord Orpington (a disciple of the old school) had hitherto exacted from her, since she presided in his house, was an irksome restraint on her natural propensity to a love of freedom, vulgar manners, violent exertion of power, and the pleasure of associating with society more congenial to her ideas,

ideas, than was that of the formal, correct, polished Peer! Barbara thought those drawbacks on her gratifications were but ill supplied by a splendid establishment at present, and the prospect of future independence. Convinced that she should not be enabled to carry any of her points with Lord Orpington, without the aid of her *new* associate, Hypocrisy, she resolved to summon it to her assistance; by the help of which she meant to reconcile all those seeming inconsistencies, and to rule "with sovereign sway and mastery."

Isabella, shocked at the free manners of her sister, and disgusted with the idle rodomontade conversation of Mr. Engross, sat revolving over the little probability there was of her deriving either credit or comfort, from the change of situation she was going to experience. An ardent sigh burst from her oppressed heart on taking a retrospective view of the sixteen years of her

past existence, ten of which had been dedicated to usefulness. What, alas ! was to be the employment of the future ? This was a question she could not answer ; but she resolved to place a firm reliance on that Providence which had ever raised her up a protector in the hour of danger !

It was one o'clock in the morning before Mr. Engross took his leave of Mrs. Stormer ; who had been earnestly recommending it to him to visit the metropolis, as the only place for talents such as he possessed, to make their way to fame and fortune ! She told him that she would use all her interest, and tax the power of her friends to do him service. Elated to the pinnacle of vanity by these flattering speeches, he kissed the hands of the lady with rapture, vowed she possessed more sagacity than the whole bench of Judges, and he should esteem the tardy moments ages, till he had the superlative happiness to throw

throw himself at her feet, and claim the promised protection of the fair arbitress of his destiny !

The sisters now retired to bed, but to sleep was out of the question, from the noisy mirth of their vociferous guests, which filled every room but those they occupied ; for though Mrs. Stormer had fixed upon the hour of twelve for the village *fête* to conclude, the Bacchanalian revels were kept up with unremitting spirit till three in the morning, at which hour the stronger heads having left most of their weaker opponents stretched supine on the floor, reeled home to their respective dwellings ; but the mischief did not end there, for the debauch of that night was not easily forgot by those who partook the carousel, nor were they for a considerable time after induced to return soberly to their several employments !

Such is the frailty of poor human nature! Equally in all situations of life prone to error, from the humble inhabitant of the straw-thatched cottage, to the luxurious inmate of the stately palace; when once they have deviated from the plain beaten track of order and propriety, by vaulting over the boundaries of rectitude, they wander on through the mazes of doubt and depravity, in pursuit of lost happiness, seeking pleasure till they encounter despair!

At ten o'clock Mrs. Stormer and Isabella were handed into the chariot by the obsequious Mr. Engross; who whispered to the former lady, that early in the ensuing winter he should have the honour of paying his respects to her in London, and claiming the patronage she had so generously promised. To this speech she nodded her approbation, and the carriage drove off, followed by the bows and thanks of the host and hostess; the latter, in recompence for her
clouded

clouded visage, had, as Jacob avowed, made a good thing of it; her assailant having pardoned her curiosity, and made her a handsome present, after paying *his* bill most liberally.

The sensitive Isabella hung her head out of the window, drowned in tears, as she caught a last view of her dear native fields, and beheld the curling smoke that arose from the cheerful habitation of the good and worthy Normans, where she had heard the voice of instruction, received protection, and experienced tender friendship. Mrs. Stormer, lost in the profundity of her own cogitations in plans for the present and the future, noticed not the sorrows of her sister, who was left to enjoy, uninterrupted, the luxury of woe! They rapidly advanced in their journey to Huntingdonshire, where they were to meet Lord Orpington, who was already at Broomgrove Priory.

We have dwelt long and minutely on the characters and incidents that Barbara met on her visit to Lenthill; because we think it incumbent on us to delineate Human Nature such as she really is, stripped of the artful deceptions in which she is dressed, to impose on the imaginations of the young and ardent; who we fear, inflated by the visionary descriptions that float in the poet's brain, will in vain seek to find them realized in our representation of rural manners! The golden age in all its primitive simplicity, that appears so fascinating in their effusions,

Where every shepherd told his tale;
Under the hawthorn in the vale,
is, alas! no where to be found but in the pastoral eclogues of Pope and Gay; by them we are amused with fabulous fictions, in which rustic swains and wood-nymphs bland are portrayed, their
bosoms

bosoms glowing with every good and virtuous propensity of which our nature is capable ; and all the evil passions are banished from their eglantine bowers, to the fretted dome of the great bad man ! This is smooth and flowery, but it is not quite just ! The follies, fashions, and vices of the metropolis have found their way to the most remote hamlets, villages, and towns in the kingdom ; where they are studied as profoundly, practised as sedulously, and followed as ardently by their inhabitants of every denomination, as in the more congenial atmosphere of St. James's !

The farmer's son with knowing crop, his chin enveloped in a wrapper of muslin, shooting jacket, and elastic half-boots, cannot be distinguished by the nicest observer from the lordly owner of his lands ! With the dress he aspires to the acquirements of his great prototype ; for this he borrows from his *charge d'affaires* the library of his master, ambitious of pursuing

pursuing the same studies, and adopting similar maxims! Thus assisted, his political opinions are founded on the writings of our new philosophers, which he would never have thought of reading if they had not been anathematized; his religious tenets from Voltaire's Universal Dictionary, and his *goût* for "*La belle passion*," from the perusal of a fashionable old new Romance; in which two or three stories and as many ballads are raked together from an equal quantity of obsolete books, dished up by an excellent *traiteur*, in high-seasoned sauce, as a *bonne bouche* for the erudite voluptuary; who while he swallows the subtle poison, admires the delicious composition that inflames his blood, corrodes his heart, and vitiates his morals!

Thus while the modern Corins are hastening to forget "all the priest and all the nurse has taught," the Cleoras are not less attentive to their improvement! In this enlightened period the
wealthy

wealthy yeoman's daughter is not employed as in days of yore—churning butter, helping to dress supper for a harvest home, making and mending the family linen, and walking to Church before her parents with a silver clasped prayer-book, the gift of her grandmother, under her arm. She must now receive an education according to *existing circumstances*; for this purpose she is sent to the next market town to imbibe the polish of a country boarding school; where, like more fashionable seminaries, every thing is taught, and nothing learned: of course she becomes a smatterer in acquirements, in which were it possible she could attain excellence, her rank of life would render useless!

The young lady rattles over a lesson, without attention to time or taste, on an old harpsichord of Shudi's, (in which half the jacks have long been stationary), that she has been instructed to finger by the blind organist; to jump a Scotch reel by a Highland bagpiper, self-denominated

minated a professor of dancing; to jabber a most unintelligible jargon, composed of bad English and worse French; to execute splash-work, knit purses, and delineate on a fire-screen the ill-fated loves of Eloisa and Abelard; while she bedews their well-sung woes with tears of commiseration, firmly believing, with Pope,

“ They best can paint them, who shall feel ’em
most.”

Thus in her own opinion highly accomplished, she returns home, fraught with vanity at her superlatives, which occasion her to despise heartily her former associates, to turn away with disgust from the blunt, boisterous manners of her father, to treat her mother’s precepts with indifference, and her homely but useful avocations with sovereign contempt! The evil does not stop here; her example is followed, her follies,

follies, affectation, dress, and pride are imitated by the lower ranks of the community, of which she is a member; till, subversive of all order, each forget their original station, and the assumption of character to which they have no pretensions, contaminates the general mass.



CHAP. X.

MRS. STORMER, in their journey into Huntingdonshire, was absorbed in reflection how she should explain her real situation to Isabella; she had by false representations imposed upon Mr. Norman, but on their arrival at the Priory deception must cease; and the more she saw of this virtuous girl's behaviour, and heard the expression of her sentiments, the more she was convinced that she would quit her directly upon the development of her character. On her susceptibility of heart Mrs. Stormer built her hopes of retaining her ;

her ; she therefore was all attention and kindness for the remainder of their journey to Broomgrove, where they were received by its lordly owner, and the sisters very politely welcomed by him to the seat of his ancestors.

Isabella was all astonishment at the magnificence of the house, the superb furniture, the glittering sideboard, the numerous attendants, and the sound of my Lord and your Lordship, which reverberated constantly in her ears from the domestics ! Awe-struck by objects so new to her, she could not combine her ideas ; her usual perspicacity was lost in torpor for several hours, nor was she restored to a sense of reflecting, and comparing the past with the present, till, on expressing a wish to retire, she was shewn by her sister's woman into an elegant dressing-room, with a bed-chamber adjoining, hung with blue satin ; which the talkative Abigail informed her Lord Orpington had himself selected

selected for her particular use. This speech instantaneously aroused her to the real situation of Mrs. Stormer in his Lordship's family! Convinced that she had been cruelly deceived, but for what purpose was yet to be ascertained, Isabella flung herself into a chair, exclaiming, she was ruined and undone; and relieved her oppressed heart by a copious flood of tears, wholly inattentive to the amazed Perkins, who addressed her—

“ Lord, Miss, what can make you take on at such a rate? A mighty misfortune truly to leave hard work and coarse fare, to come and live an idle life, have servants to attend you, dine every day with Noblemen, eat off plate, ride in a fine carriage, and go when you are in London to plays, operas, and masquerades every night! I wish with all my heart I was in your place, and was going to be ruined and undone in the same way; but some people are born with a silver spoon in their mouth;

I am

I am not so lucky as to have my sister kept by a Lord !”

Shocked at the insolent familiarity of this woman, Isabella desired she would leave the room, and learn before her to speak with more respect of Mrs. Stormer, or she should be obliged to inform her of the unwarrantable liberties she took with her character.

On receiving this reproof from Isabella, to whom she had not given credit for so much spirit, she quitted the apartment, banging the door after her, but not before she had exclaimed aloud, “ Well, to be sure, I wonder how some people can think of giving themselves airs about the character of one who never had any to lose ; I am certain if I valued mine, I should not condescend to live with any Lord’s Madam.”

Perkins had resided with Barbara from the time she had commenced fine lady ; had traced her through all her gradations with the most persevering industry,

industry, and having made herself acquainted with her birth, parentage, and education, thought she was on an equality with her mistress in every thing but luck. Envious of her good fortune, this girl was ever arraigning her conduct, throwing out inuendoes on her low origin, exposing the turbulence of her temper, and the vulgarity of her manners, to the insolent comments and sarcastic witticisms of the steward's table. Nothing made her continue to live with Mrs. Stormer but a view to her own interest; for that lady was extravagant, and she reaped the advantage of her profusion! On the introduction of this country sister into the family, her avarice took the alarm; she therefore endeavoured to frighten and disgust her on the first onset, fearful that she should divide with her the perquisites of office.

Isabella

Isabella was truly wretched; she knew not how to act; she had voluntarily accepted her sister's protection, was without friends or money, some hundred miles from her native village; did she determine to return, no person there would afford her an asylum, but the humane Mr. Norman. But how return? It was not to be supposed that Barbara would supply her with the means; the good Curate, she was well assured, had it not in his power to assist her, whose small stipend required the most rigid economy to enable it to furnish out a frugal board, and support his numerous offspring.

While thus lost in sorrowful retrospection, she leant her head on her crossed arms, regardless of the splendor by which she was surrounded, and the luxuriant and beautiful prospect of hill and dale, wood and water, most happily blended, that met her eye from the windows, which, had she not been totally immersed

immersed in grief, could not have failed to charm and exhilarate an unadulterated child of Nature !

She was roused from her reverie by the entrance of Mrs. Stormer, who seeing her tears, and guessing the cause, perceived the necessity of throwing off the mask, as all subterfuge would in future be useless. She began, therefore, to work on the feelings of her sister, folding her to her bosom, and depicting the ardency of her affection, saying that she had been obliged to use a little artifice to gain her consent to share her heart and fortune ; assured of the obsolete notions and unjust prejudices she had to combat with from those secluded in a village, situated above two hundred miles from the metropolis ; who would not fail to arraign a woman, however ill-treated by a husband, if she escaped from his brutality, to throw herself on the protection of a man of honour ! Here Isabella would have interrupted her,

her, but she entreated a patient hearing, avowing she came purposely to explain the motives of all her actions.

Barbara now recounted her eventful story, from her first parting with her sister to the present hour; but not thinking it necessary to descend to strict attention to the trifling minutiae of matter of fact, the circumstances were so garbled, glossed over, transposed, and vividly coloured by the artful reciter, that the tale of her cruel sorrows, and heroic deeds, would have made no contemptible figure in a modern Romance!

By this artful address, she supposed it must appear palpable to her auditress, that her husband was the worst of men, and she the most injured of wives, whose behaviour in situations of trial and tribulation had been truly exemplary; and, lastly, that it was not possible for her to act otherwise than she had done! Thus by false representations, hypocri-

VOL. I. K tical

tical blandishments, and the assumption of a character to which she had no pretensions, she imposed on the innocent susceptible Isabella, whom she left not till she had promised that she would partake her affluence.

Ambitious of seeing her sister raised to consequence, and having herself most mortifyingly experienced the want of education, she resolved, on their return to London, to procure masters for Isabella, in whose lessons she could contrive to be a partaker ! It has been before observed that Isabella, through the kind care of her friend, the matron, and the attentions of Mr. Norman, was a good English scholar ; she read well, and was very fond of it. His Lordship had a superb library of well-chosen books, in which the happiest moments of her time were passed, while she resided at Broomgrove.

Accustomed

Accustomed to early rising, she employed the hours from six in the morning till ten; when she was expected in her sister's dressing-room to preside at the breakfast table; to the improvement of her mind, was dedicated that time she stole from sleep. With new-born rapture she perused the historic pages of the classic Robinson, the elegant Hume, and the learned Gibbon; or expanded her ideas, refined her sentiments, and amended her heart, by the works of a Steele, an Addison, or a Johnson!

Lord Orpington who admired her modest unassuming manners, and heard with admiration the sensible and pertinent remarks she made, when called upon to give her opinion on any subject to which she felt herself competent, observing her love of reading, and her praiseworthy desire of information, condescended to select and recommend to her those authors, that he thought

were best calculated for the purpose. By the time, therefore, they left the Priory for Cavendish-Square, Isabella had divested herself of much of that awkward bashfulness that precluded her person and talents from being properly appreciated.

On their arrival in London, the pride of Mrs. Stormer induced her to have her sister well dressed, knowing the advantage of a favourable first impression. She employed the best masters to instruct them both in French, dancing, and music; in all those acquirements Isabella made a rapid improvement: not arrived at a stubborn age, she was attentive, diligent, and desirous of excelling.

Barbara had the same inclination to learn, but not the capabilities of Isabella. The former had from nature a quick perception, a strong mind, and a masculine understanding! Had the germ been carefully cultivated in early youth,

youth, it might have produced good fruit; "for as the tree is fashioned, so 'twill grow;" but though planted in a rich soil, left to run wild, it becomes choked with brambles, briars, and baneful weeds, where the fox-glove, the black hellebore, and the deadly night-shade intermixed, shed a deleterious poison that precludes vegetation.— Thus it was in the mind of Barbara; what might have been judgment, wit, and sense, was degenerated into cunning to circumvent, and hypocrisy to deceive!

Perfectly ignorant of the idioms of the language of her own country, she had neither capability nor patience to acquire that of another, which must have been learned with grammatical accuracy! For music she had neither ear nor taste; her's was not a soul to be touched by the concord of sweet sounds—there was not an atom of harmony in her composition! Her size

and figure were not formed to trip it on the light fantastic toe, or thread the mazes of the graceful dance! This she did not herself believe; for though fain unwillingly to renounce the two former accomplishments, the latter she was persuaded might be conquered by perseverance, that requiring only bodily exertion;—to this she thought herself fully as competent as the fragile form of Isabella, who bounded light as a Sylph. In vain she blushed at the folly of her sister, and had she dared, — would have remonstrated; in vain *Monsieur Pas-seul* shrugged his shoulders, threw his pliant body into more contortions, exhibited more grimaces in his ever-varying face than usual, at her uncouth efforts and violent exertions.

Mrs. Stormer would still have persevered in making herself ridiculous, and never have given up her favourite amusement, had not a malicious trick been played her, that exposed her dancing

dancing abilities in the most burlesque point of view.

Perkins, whose great pleasure was in rendering the foibles of her mistress conspicuous, informed the guests at the second table, that if they would hold themselves in readiness at three o'clock the next day, she would shew them some high sport. The late Marshal Saxe avowed that no man was a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*; so do we assert that nothing transacted in a family, is a secret to the assisting priestess of the toilet; for though the masters that daily attended in their various departments were said to be for the finishing Miss Nelson's education, and Mrs. Stormer only sat in the room while she took her lessons, from a high sense of propriety; Perkins, who had availed herself of the privileges of chamber-maid information, listening and peeping, knew this was not quite the fact; she therefore laid her plan accordingly.

The temple dedicated for the instructions of *Monsieur Pas-seul* was situated immediately over the eating-room. This consequential personage was not a capering quack, that advertises in the diurnal prints to teach grown gentlemen to dance in twelve lessons! *Monsieur Pas-seul* was a regular bred professor of the divine art, that Horace has made immortal by deigning to praise. No, he was of immense importance in his own opinion, had been first serious man in the Ballets of the *Grand Monarque*, and was induced, for the trifling sum of two thousand guineas, to transport himself to the barbarous shores of England! He was the very Prince of curvets, could spin on one leg like a tetotum, a being of high renown in Operatic annals, whom Countesses smiled on, Duchesses nodded at, and to whom Prime Ministers bowed! To shew their affection
on

on the night of his benefit, the gay wife, buxom widow, and starched virgin were alike content to wait in the Haymarket from three to six, and dine in their carriages for fear they should not get a place, to once more behold their favourite; such was the overflow of company to do him honour.

CHAP. XI.

WHEN this great man's chariot drew up to the door, who, like other great men, estimated his power and consequence by the ill-judged partiality, and servile adulation of his followers, dependants, and flatterers; Perkins directly stationed one of the footmen to give her notice, by a signal previously agreed upon, if his ears were assailed by an uncommon noise. Lord Orpington was in his study, when Perkins, followed by the housekeeper, the *valet-de-chambre*, and the major-domo, rushed to the door, exclaiming,

in

in one voice, "We pray your Lordship to go into my Lady's dressing-room; for having received orders not to enter on pain of her displeasure, we dare not, yet are fearful something terrible has happened, for Thomas says there is the most tremendous noise in the apartment he ever heard; he verily thinks the room has been shook by an earthquake!"

"This is a very ridiculous story to trouble me with," replied Lord Orpington; "leave my presence instantly!"

The rest drew back, but the courageous Perkins was not to be deterred from her purpose by the frowns of a Lord! She therefore returned to the charge, by begging pardon for her boldness, but still urging her suit that his Lordship would be pleased to go and see if her dear mistress was not fallen into fits.

To rid himself of her clamorous importunity, he arose, followed by his

curious vassals, who wondered where it was all to end! When they reached the dressing-room, the door was thrown open by Lord Orpington, which discovered to the amazed beholders *Monsieur Pas-seul* scraping away on his kit in an agony of passion, while he beat time to the Spanish Fandango, formerly so charmingly executed by Rossi and Le Picq. Mrs. Stormer had insisted that she and Isabella could dance it very well together! Their instructor having witnessed her obstinacy, and not chusing to combat her violence, unwillingly acceded to her request; and she was, on the entrance of her *cher ami*, in the act of jumping till the floor shook with her weight, with a purse in each hand instead of castanets; while her large black eyes rolled with eagerness, and the unaccustomed exertion occasioned a dewy suffusion to pour from her face in torrents, impelling in its course lily paste and Circassian bloom.

She

She looked to the astonished Lord Orpington like a frantic *Bacchante* about to celebrate the Eleusynian mysteries !

On the entrance of the unwelcome intruders, the revels ceased : but the appearance of the dancing group was so truly *comique*, that hardly could their Lord's presence subdue in the domestics their ardent desire to laugh ; while Perkins advanced, saying, in a whining tone, " Thomas told us he heard such an uncommon noise, I was afraid your Ladyship was in convulsions."

" What then, insolent wretch !" exclaimed the enraged Barbara, " is it to your impertinent officiousness I owe this intrusion ?"—Saying this, she flew at the affrighted Abigail, who now began to wish herself a thousand miles off ; but having been often accustomed to avoid her hands, she ducked her head most knowingly, just as *Monsieur Pas-seul*, with that chivalric attention to the fair sex

sex practised during the old *Regime* of France, was advancing to rescue Mademoiselle Perkins from the fangs of Barbara, when he received the well-meant blow, intended for her, between his grey twinklers. Soon the crimson torrent poured copiously over his tambour waistcoat, and satin *culottes*!

The dismayed curvetter, to whom the room seemed to turn round, reeled to a chair, while the enraged Thalestris snatched his ill-fated kit, with which she belaboured the cause of all her mortification, the mischief-loving *femme-de-chambre*: those on the outside, perceiving what was likely to be the result of their *hoax*, decamped in haste, leaving their General in the power of the foe: nor can we say what would have been the fate of the venturous Perkins, had not his Lordship rescued her from the merciless gripe of her passionate mistress; but this was not effected before she had shivered the little harmonic
6. instrument

instrument to pieces about her head and shoulders !

While this scene of confusion was passing at one end of the room, the shocked and trembling Isabella, bathed in tears, was lending her aid at the other to stop the effusion of human blood, that continued to flow from the nasal organ of the *malheureux Pas-seul* ; whose alternate sighs, groans, and interjections for his bruises, spoiled embroidery, and shattered Cremona, were “ pitiful, most wondrous pitiful !”

His Lordship having at length prevailed on Mrs. Stormer to retire from the scene of carnage, returned to make an apology, in the name of that lady, for the misfortunes she had unintentionally occasioned, and to beg Monsieur's acceptance of a twenty pound Bank bill, to reinstate his losses. The sight of Abraham Newland, the sterling value of whose name he had learned to appreciate, acted as a charm to renovate his depressed spirits;

spirits ; this, added to the condescending condolence of the great man, made him forget his aches. He bowed, grinned, called it a mere *bagatelle*, promised profound secrecy, and with features as much increased as his purse, stepped into his chariot with a heavy head, and a light heart.

To the supreme offence of the subscribers to the Opera, the grand *Ballet* that was to have been performed that evening, was obliged to be postponed, and an apology made to his numerous admirers, that *Monsieur Pas-seul* had met with an accident that prevented his dancing ! What that accident was, and how it happened, with all the embellishments of witty malevolence, was soon whispered through the house by the active exertions of Lady Sparkle ; who assembled what she called her attendant sprights round her, the loungers of Fop's Alley, bidding them divest themselves of their usual listlessness, and proclaim to all
whom

whom it might concern to know, that the *pauvre diable Pas-seul*, had that morning been giving a lesson on graceful motion to the overgrown favourite of that old dotard Orpington, who had never married, because in these degenerate days the women had too much sense, wit, and spirit; and all he wanted in a wife was soft compliance, passive obedience, and non-resistance to his high behest!

“Well, has he found the phoenix?” asked, with a sigh, the henpecked Lord Lenient.

“This question will be best answered,” replied her Ladyship, “by the black eyes and woe-begone countenance of *Pas-seul*; who, while he was trying to mould her inflexible joints into something like form, they were interrupted by the entrance of his Lordship; he thought the house was shook by a tornado, came to inquire the cause, on which she flew at him like a tigress robbed of her whelps, and with
one

one well-aimed stroke, his debilitated Lordship measured his length on the floor. *Pas-seul*, advancing in quick time to save a second blow, intended for the prostrate Peer, had the ill luck to receive it on his nose; thrown off his balance, he made a false step, reeled a few paces, levelled by the equalizing fist of his termagant scholar, he took his place quietly by the side of Nobility; while the conqueror trimmed pretty handsomely the prancing Knight, and the oratorical senator, with the devoted kit of the former!

They were rescued from her talons by the cook-maid: his Lordship was carried to bed, unable to speak, and the Prince of *entre-chats* lifted into his chariot, having totally lost the use of his legs.

This story, ridiculously told by her Ladyship, with the usual additions and alterations, kept its allotted station for nine days; was the kill-hour before dinner at the Clubs, and furnished conversation

versation between a rubber at Casino at all the fashionable parties in town, till time restored to them the divine *Passeul*; when, as he vaulted in mid air, or whirled round on one leg, they forgot, in their acclamations, his laughable misadventures, and their ridiculous occasion!

Not so easily was the mortifying scene erased from the mind of Lord Orpington; who now plainly perceived, while he had been devoting all his youth to single blessedness, from the fear of being managed by a wife, he had given up his old age to the tyranny of a mistress, who ruled her crouching subject with an iron sceptre. Regretting the turpitude of the past, ashamed of the folly of the present, and dreading the future, he dragged on a joyless existence, a sad memento of the comforts of bachelorism!

After Lord Orpington had said as much as he dared on the ridiculous behaviour of his dear Barbara, he ventured
to

to recommend two things to her consideration ; first, that she should immediately discharge from her service, her impertinent *femme-de-chambre*, whose intention was evidently to expose her to the diversion of the domestics, a plot which her own unbridled passions had rendered effectual ; secondly, he desired that she would take no more lessons in dancing !

Barbara, fearing she had rather gone too far, promised a ready compliance with these requests. Having gained those essential points, he ordered the travelling carriages to the door, proposing to run down to a seat he had in the vicinity of Bath for a month, allowing time for the town to have its laugh, before he ventured again to meet his friends.

Isabella was delighted with the idea of this journey ; she loved the country, where she assiduously cultivated her understanding. She dreaded nothing so much as being seen in public at present.

present, while the morning papers teemed with ludicrous accounts of the dancing *fracas*! Her acute feelings of rectitude made her suffer so severely when obliged to accompany her sister to places of amusement, that it precluded her receiving any gratification from those diversions, calculated to delight a young woman at her period of life, just emerged from seclusion.

Her lovely face was covered with burning blushes at the familiar how are you? and confident stare of the men, that they thought themselves authorised to use to the sister of the acknowledged mistress of Lord Orpington; while Isabella hung on her arm, she observed, with deep regret, they were reconnoitred with looks of cold contempt, or shrank from with those of horror, by the virtuously correct of their own sex; as if they feared the coming in contact with frailty would contaminate their purity!

But

But more insufferable, more humiliating was the overawing insolence, the averted head, and the rude loud laugh of fashionable demireps, who themselves are inexcusably culpable, having no pretence but a depraved heart, for their vices : yet these Right Honourable sinners are received in the best regulated families, the magnitude of their crimes are sunk in the immensity of their possessions, or forgot in the pomposity of their heraldic bearings !

It is true, we sometimes hear of these noble culprits being brought before the awful tribunal of Doctors Commons, but of the numerous delinquents, who, more fortunate or wary, escape detection, we know nothing ; while an unfortunate female, who from a too susceptible heart, falls a sacrifice to the artful machinations of man, if deluded and forsaken, is propelled to embrace a situation at which her soul revolts, the proscribed sufferer is by these consequential, protected

protected transgressors shunned, insulted, anathematized, and crushed into annihilation !

On their return from the country, the laugh against the inmates of Orpington House was tolerably subsided ; and his Lordship and Mrs. Stormer again ventured, with unblushing fronts, to set public opinion at nought, and meet their *Peers* ! The lady, as she had promised, gave up dancing, but Isabella continued to receive instructions from the best masters, being desirous of improvement ; which, aided by diligence and indefatigable attention, promised to render her mind as accomplished, as her person and manners were fascinating.

These united *agrémens* soon gained her the admiration of many of his Lordship's illustrious friends, who were in the habits of visiting constantly in Cavendish Square. The very different behaviour of Barbara, frequently induced Lord Orpington, in that lady's squabbles

squabbles for dominion, to recommend to her imitation so fair an example as her sister.

This notice taken of Isabella, and these remonstrances in her favour, were well calculated to arouse all the combustible particles of Barbara's nature; her pride, envy, and jealousy burst into a flame. She execrated the folly of that hour in which she took her from the foolish Parson, and the stupidity of having educated her in a manner calculated to make her own deficiencies appear the more glaring: added to this, she had lately dared assume the character of a mentor, arraign her conduct, act as a spy upon her actions; on which she took the liberty of commenting, moralizing, offering her opinion, and giving advice! For these weighty considerations, she determined on ridding herself of so troublesome a companion, as soon as possible.

Mrs.

Mrs. Stormer knew the world and its prejudices too well, to suppose, whatever were Isabella's merits, that a man of fashion would marry her sister. To have seen her the wife of a tradesman, would have been a degradation to her own assumed consequence, to which she could not submit! She reflected that there were many of the visitors at Orpington House, who admired Isabella, and who had often hinted how happy they should be to live a life of honour with so lovely a girl!

One only had talked what she called properly on the subject, that was, proposing to settle five hundred pounds a year, and forming for her a handsome establishment. This noble personage to whom she intended to sacrifice the blooming Isabella, was a Lord Lorimore, a man whose heart was depraved by a long course of vicious pursuits; his manners were specious and hypocritical. His whole life had been

VOL. I. L dedicated

dedicated to the destruction of trusting females; and he boasted among his libertine companions, that no man had been so useful in his generation, or so much aided the population of the country by his numerous offspring, having introduced more beautiful women on the *paré* than any of his compeers!

This gay seducer, at the time he first saw Isabella at Lord Orpington's table, was in the wane of his glory, being on the wrong side of fifty, and appearing much older than he was, in despite of a most sedulous attention to the toilet, to repair by art the dilapidations of time; his powers of attraction were fast falling into the "sear, the yellow leaf." Though his person felt the full force of a premature decay, his mind remained vigorous in the pursuit of vice; to gratify his favourite passions he would go all lengths, outrage all order, trample on the laws of hospitality,

talities, and set those of the land at defiance!

This was the character of a man who, feeling a *vacuum* in his vitiated fancy, at the moment he beheld Isabella, she became the object of his caprice; we will not degrade the word *love* by annexing it to the sensation that induced Lord Lorimore to follow, persecute, and insult with his offers of protection, the innocent object of his depraved inclination. When she found that the artifices of his Lordship were winked at by Mrs. Stormer, who evidently gave him opportunities to torment her with his odious addresses, she resolved to come to an explanation with her sister on the subject. This had taken place on the very morning that Mr. Stuart had been shewn into the adjoining room, and overheard the conversation already recited; in consequence of which, Barbara, thinking to frighten Isabella into her snares, had literally turned her out

of doors, with very little money in her pocket, and the identical clothes she brought with her from Lenthill.

Mrs. Hunt had very soon, on their return from Broeingrove to London, contrived to meet her god-daughter; to whom, after affectionately embracing her, she expressed deep regret at seeing her living on the wages of a sister's prostitution; observing that such wicked doings could not prosper long, she emphatically exclaimed with the royal prophet—

“I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree: I went by, and lo, he was gone! I sought him, but his place could no where be found!”

“Such, my dear child, is the ultimate end of all those misguided disciples of vice; therefore do not allow yourself to be tempted to forsake the paths of honesty, but come to me, and share my humble fare.

Thus

Thus the worthy woman, whenever they met, always earnestly recommended to Isabella a steady perseverance in those religious principles in which she had fortunately been educated; inculcating in her mind the cause of virtue, and encouraging her never to be dismayed by the terrors of honest poverty!

To this well-meant advice Isabella's heart assented; and those plain and simple facts, often repeated by the good creature, enabled her young friend to keep her mind pure and uncontaminated amidst all those temptations to vice by which she was surrounded; and finally to fly for shelter under her maternal roof, firmly resolved to cheerfully return to the situation of life in which she was bred, and support herself as she had formerly done, by the exertions of industry.

was till the coach stopped at the British Coffee-house, at which place he had ordered himself to be set down in case He found the thing in the end.

He waited for me, who looking at his watch, saw he had been there an hour, and had lost him.

CHAP. XII.

self for want of a pilot, but observed that in a minute or two, he was again in the boat, and he had done as much for him.

AFTER a digression necessary to the elucidation of our story, for we are not of the order of Novelists who think it necessary to the interest of our work, to puzzle and perplex our readers in a labyrinth of doubts and difficulties, trusting the history will please most that is easily comprehended; we will therefore return to Mr. Stuart, who left Newington, his bosom palpitating with emotions to which it haply had been hitherto a stranger. He was lost in so pleasing a reverie, that he was unconscious of the passing time, or where he

was,

was, till the coach stopped at the British Coffee-house, at which place he had ordered himself to be set down.

He found his young friend, Mr. Nesbit, waiting for him, who, looking at his watch, swore he had been there an hour, and was afraid he had lost himself for want of a pilot; but observed that making him wait was all fair, as he found he had done as much for him in the morning. The entrance of dinner, and the presence of the waiters precluded any particular conversation till the cloth was withdrawn, and they left to their bottle of port.

Mr. Nesbit, filling a bumper, said, "Come, here's success to the wooden walls of our island, who need not fear a foreign enemy while she is protected by these floating bulwarks; if their timbers are sound, and their commanders staunch, "our foes shall rue, if England to herself do prove but true."—His toast being pledged, and the truth of his

L 4

assertions

assertions acknowledged by Andrew, the following dialogue commenced :—

“Stuart, I beg your pardon for breaking my appointment with you this morning, but it was inevitable ; if, or I am much mistaken, you have some particles of pride and spirit in your composition as well as myself, you will easily forgive me, when you hear my motives for leaving my uncle’s house so abruptly. To do this, I must act the egotist, and speak a great deal of my dear self.”

“By the confidence of Mr. Nesbit, I shall esteem myself honoured, and shall be happy to make it mutual ; but I entreat that you will not deem it necessary to apologize for the loss of an hour to an idle fellow, who knew not at that period how to have better disposed of his time : besides, my visit to Lord Orpington’s is likely to engage me in an adventure that may occasion me much pleasure.”

“Indeed !”

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Nesbit; "has the blind goddess been already so propitious as to throw her favours in your way? You must be one of the elect! Not so your friend Charles; as I will convince you by a brief account of myself and family.

"Colonel Nesbit, my father, was the only brother of the present Lord Orpington; to whose title, and the entailed estate of Broomgrove Priory, my brother George is heir, in default of male issue. My uncle having been too nice in his selection of a wife to marry early, lived a bachelor to the age of fifty; about this period, with a debilitated constitution, a mind enervated, and a temper soured by repeated disappointment in his search after a female phoenix, he fell into the snares laid for him by the most artful of her sex, who, under the title of his mistress, governs his domestic establishment with absolute sway—a tyrant to the master, a scourge to his

L 5 servants,

servants, having, after the first twelve-month, turned out those who were grown grey in his service, and placed her own creatures in their several departments. She has affronted all his friends but such as chose to pay their court to her, and has insulted his relations with impunity; for, between dotage and terror, she has his unfortunate Lordship so totally under the hatches, that he dares not interfere."

"I believe you have given a just delineation of this female scorpion, whose sting is most venomous! When you have concluded your narrative, in which I feel much interest, I have also something to impart concerning Mrs. Stormer."

"I am all amazement! In the name of wonder, my friend, how should you know the harpy, who have not been in London four-and-twenty hours? Be assured, impatient for your intelligence, I will be as concise as the nature of my tale will admit.—My father, a younger

younger brother, was to owe his establishment to one of those professions dedicated to the junior branches of noble families, the Church, Navy, or Army; he made his election for the latter, determining to owe his fortune to his sword, and bind his youthful brow with laurels gathered in the field of glory! To accomplish this, he requested a commission might be procured for him in a regiment upon actual service; his mind was too vivid, and his *amor patriæ* too ardent, to allow him to follow the advice of his lady mother, and become one of his Royal Master's body guards! He heartily despised those quality scions, those military loungers, when he beheld them, with rude insult, pushing females from the pavement; as linked arm in arm they drag, in listless languor, their slow length along from Pall-Mall to St. James's, from thence to Bond-Street, an annoying nuisance to the passing pedestrians!

“My father, according to his wishes, was engaged in some hot actions on the Continent, where he distinguished himself with much bravery, and was promoted to the rank of Captain. On his return to England with the skeleton of his regiment, that was to be recruited, he was sent upon this service into Devonshire; a county that has gained celebrity by the various men of genius it has produced.

“Here he met with my mother; she was the only daughter of an Officer in the Navy: in her were blended those talents so rarely found in the same person, uniting the most playful fancy, sprightly wit, with sound sense! This rendered her a fascinating companion, for the ebullitions of the two former were corrected by the judgment of the latter. Her mind was cultivated, her manners polished, added to a large share of personal beauty: but she had one defect that, in the world's estimation, counterbalanced

balanced all her perfections—she had no fortune.” “Could that,” exclaimed the amazed Andrew, “weigh one moment with a generous man, where so many charms of mind and person were united in the object of his love?”

“It did not, my dear friend; and though his children are the sufferers in their pecuniary concerns, believe me when I say, that I glory in the conduct of my father, who spurning every sordid consideration, gave me the kindest, best of parents, whose loss her family will long deplore. Her memory will always be dear to her Charles.” Here he dashed a tear from his glowing, manly cheek.

“Do not set me down, Stuart, for a whimpering milk-sop; but I adored my mother, and when I reflect on, and delineate her urbanity of manners, elegant talents, and numerous virtues, depressed and crushed to the earth, herself

herself hurried to an untimely grave by the disgusting aristocracy of proud oppression, the contumelious insolence of titled greatness, and the overweening consequence of ponderous wealth, "it unmans me, unbraces my firm nerves, and I could sob like a boarding school girl."

"Surely you cannot think any excuse necessary to a rational being, for having expressed sorrow at the loss of such a woman as you emphatically describe Mrs. Nesbit to have been. Pray proceed; I am much interested in your story, and anxious to know what could have occasioned those woes you so feelingly deplore."

"That will be easily explained. My father, who was madly in love with Miss Colmore, by whom his passion was returned with equal fervour, wrote to the late Lord Orpington, soliciting his consent to their marriage, depicting the merits of his charmer, and how
much

much the future happiness of his life depended on their union. The answer was what might have been expected from an avaricious Nobleman, proud of his dignity, tenacious of the antiquity of his family; who expected the honour of being allied to it, joined to the handsome person of his son, would procure for him the hand of some rich heiress, whose money would of course give equal consequence to the second branch of the family tree, as what would lineally descend to the first! This proposal of taking a portionless wife from the private walk of life, who had no other claims to recommend her to his and the world's notice, than her father's valour and her own beauty, talents, and merit, met his decided disapprobation.

“ He wrote to Captain Nesbit, expressing himself in the strongest and harshest terms his fancy could suggest, and his anger dictate, at the mad scheme

scheme generated by his love-sick folly, and he supposed aided by the artful machinations of the girl, who was drawing him into his ruin; concluding his acrimonious epistle by saying, that if his caprice was so violent, and he chose to make her his mistress, so far from interfering, he would himself settle a hundred a year upon her; with a proviso that he returned to town in a month, by which time he supposed he would be heartily sick of his *Dolly*. He should then expect to find him prepared to pay his addresses to one of the rich heiresses of Sir Francis Dowgate. He had already arranged the affair with the Baronet, and either of the ladies were at his service, with two hundred thousand pounds!"

"Are there such men, whose depraved hearts could recommend to a son the seduction of confiding innocence, and encourage vice by providing for its disciples?"

"Most

“Most assuredly ; there are numbers in this great city who would, I fear, act just like my grandfather. We live, my friend, in what is called a liberal age, which the sectaries of the new philosophy have emancipated from the thralldom of restraint, and taught its inhabitants to scoff at religious sentiments, despise civil order, and pay no attention to the moral fitness of things, but as it contributes to the gratification of their ambition, their pleasure, or their interest ! You are a novice in the ways of this world ; I, though no older than yourself, am your senior in that sort of knowledge by at least ten years. To do away your surprises, I am led to digress ; but if I don't mind my *bearings*, my tale will be like some late works of celebrity, the notes longer than the story : *Tant mieux !*

“As soon as my father had perused the packet of which I have given you the purport, his face glowed with
resentment,

resentment, and his expressive eyes shot angry glances at the terms of unjust reproach uttered against his adored Sophia. The idea of making her his mistress, the supposition that he was so lost to honour, love, and feeling, as to be a premeditated villain, shock his bosom with a storm of contending passions.

The result was, the determining to make his lovely enslaver immediately his wife, maugre all the anathemas urged against the deed by Lord Orpington. Thus resolved, he flew to Captain Colmore's, and throwing himself at her feet, offered his hand to Sophia. He allowed it was true that at present he could not obtain his father's consent; but he had no doubt when he found the knot was irrevocably tied, he would gladly receive so charming a daughter.

“Long and ardent were the struggles in the bosom of my mother between love and reason; and, as usual, the blind urchin,

urchin, aided by the sophistry of his handsome associate, ultimately prevailed ! She knew Captain Colmore would never consent that his girl should be smuggled into any man's family, however high and mighty his pretensions. This worthy veteran, after having for the space of forty years ploughed the salt deep, been in ten engagements, in which he had been six times wounded, was now, at the age of fifty, only Captain of a sloop, that was stationed to skirt the coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall, to protect them from marauders.

“ Captain Colmore was a true British sailor, skilful, loyal, valiant, and worthy; but his progenitors were not noble, nor had he any Borough interest to remind the state pilot that a man so gifted might be made eminently useful to his country ! Of course he got no preferment ; but laboured on in the drudgery of the profession, doing his duty

duty to his King most faithfully, without even the hope of reward, to sweeten the toils of labour ! Still he persevered, though he found himself, after years of service, a poor Lieutenant, fated to uncover his silver locks and scarred forehead, that ought to have been wreathed with laurels, while he had the mortification to wait for orders from an Admiral, who had from him received his first nautical instructions.

“ On the arrival of my grandfather's letter, this worthy veteran was on a cruise to the Land's End. My father availed himself of his absence, to win a trembling consent from his Sophia, that she would elope with him to the Island of Guernsey ; where they might be united, as she had not attained the age which the sapient rulers of the land deem that of discretion !

“ They embarked with propitious gales, and arrived in safety at what appeared to them the Paphian Isle ;
where

where after receiving the nuptial benediction from a Protestant Clergyman, they returned to Captain Nesbit's lodgings, too happy at the present moment to think of the future.

“ Both their parents were written to, and their pardon solicited. My maternal grandfather, though angry at first, was melted into tenderness when he beheld his children clasping his knees; he raised, embraced, forgave, and blessed them! Not so acted Lord Orpington, to the pleadings of his son to be restored to his favour and affection; and that he would permit him to introduce his wife, adding that they asked not to share his patrimony, but his love, for with that he should be but too happy, and the domestic felicity he flattered himself with enjoying in the society of his charming Sophia, who was content to share a soldier's fortune.

“In answer to this he was informed, that as he had rejected his advice, degraded himself, and scandalized his family and connexions, by selecting a woman from the *canaille*, without birth or fortune, whose affinity it was impossible he could ever acknowledge; as he had chose to act in direct opposition to his commands, therefore having thrown off his respect, duty, and allegiance, he would never hear him named, receive a letter from, or see him more, and should endeavour to forget he was ever cursed with so undutiful a son!

“This vindictive parent too well kept his word: he never could, by the united endeavours of their mutual friends, be induced to receive his daughter-in-law; though she was the most correct, sensible, and prudent of women, the best of wives and mothers.

“When she beheld her beloved husband obliged to provide for a growing family, by secluding himself from the

the society with whom he was born to associate, his talents lost to his country, owing to his attachment to her, it sunk deep in her heart, and preyed upon her spirits ; yet she complained not, exerting herself to appear cheerful in the presence of her husband : but in his absence she would deluge the face of my brother and myself with tears, and sigh out her bitter regret, while she condemned herself as the cause that estranged us from our grandfather, rendered us aliens to our relatives, and robbed our father of wealth, honour, and preferment.



CHAP. XIII.

“ABOUT this period, some friends of my father exerted themselves with the Minister, and he was offered a Majority to go to the East Indies. The idea of a separation from his Sophia was terrible; but perceiving no prospect of Lord Orpington's relenting from his vindictive vow, how was he to provide for his innocent offspring, but by pursuing his profession? When my mother was made acquainted with the intended arrangement, she kept her sorrow and despair confined to her own lacerated bosom, earnestly advising him to avail himself of it,

it, painting in the most vivid colours that the grief of parting would be effaced in the pleasure of a re-union, when she hoped to be enabled to restore their children to his arms, all that a fond parent could wish.

“ Desirous to place his Sophia and her little ones in a situation more congenial to her merits and his affection, he tore himself from her circling arms, and embarked for the shores of Hindostan; that land of promise where arises the spring of Pactolus, rolling its golden waves to enrich the youthful adventurer!

“ My mother, whose ardent mind had long preyed on itself, for she was an uncomplaining victim to the prejudices of inflated greatness, ever thinking herself the cause that banished her husband from his family, his country, and his children, pined in secret, and
“ let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek.”

“ She lingered two years after my father’s departure for Bengal, and then expired in the arms of Captain Colmore; with her last breath recommending her beloved boys to his protection. A few weeks previous to her death she received a letter from my father, written in high spirits, acquainting her that he was raised to the rank of Colonel, and his regiment going to take the field, to attack Hyder Ally. Soon after in an engagement equally fatal to many brave fellows, he fell, covered with wounds.

“ Thus at nearly the same period, my brother George and myself at one fatal stroke were bereaved of the best of parents, and left two helpless orphans, to struggle up to manhood on the bounty of those proud relations, who had shewn no mercy to the persecuted authors of our existence. At the demise of my mother, George was nine, and myself eight years of age. She had,

had, when her husband sailed for India, retired to bury herself in solitude with her father, at a small village in Devonshire; who, indignant at the usage his Sophia had received from Lord Orpington, which he was assured had broke her heart, never condescended to write to him on the subject of her sickness or death, but occasioned it to be announced in the newspapers; determined to support us from the small pittance of his half-pay, till he heard from our father. For this laudable purpose he placed us at an excellent school in Tiverton.

“ When the dreadful intelligence arrived at Orpington House that Colonel Nesbit was killed, after having performed many brave actions, this, added to my mother’s death, awakened the hushed conscience of his Lordship; who now, goaded by all the agonizing scorpions of remorse, thought to patch up a peace with the stinging monitor, by

M 2

exploring

exploring the residence of the offspring of his now regretted son ; and like the Houses of Capulet and Mountague, rear a monument to blazon the sufferings, virtues, and merits of the unfortunate pair, whose peace, happiness, and lives he had immolated to the shrine of vindictive pride, unjust resentment, and false ambition !

“ A letter from my lordly grandfather soon found its way to our humble dwelling, requesting Captain Colmore would deliver us up to his protection ; as he would educate and provide for us in a manner we had a right to expect from his affection and consanguinity.

“ This was a sad stroke upon the heart of the good veteran ; as it was to divide him from all that were now left to smoothen the downhill path of a tempest-beaten life, for he was old, and felt that he could not flatter himself with the hope of seeing us reared to maturity, nor be enabled, from his slender

slender means, to provide for us at his death. He therefore would not, from so selfish a consideration as his own particular comfort, deprive us of the more able support of Lord Orpington.

“ Having reasoned himself into the resolution of parting with us for our advantage, we were sent for from school; and while folding us in his arms, he read the epistle that was perhaps to divide us from him for ever !

“ George was good-natured, lively, and versatile; he had no steadiness—the last amusement and the last friend had him ! To such a disposition, a plan that promised variety was embraced with avidity ; therefore though his tears flowed fast, as he beheld the eyes of Captain Colmore suffused, he did not object to changing his present habitation for Orpington House ; attempting to comfort his weeping grandfather by assurances that he would make it his first request to his Lordship, to be

allowed the happiness of spending with him all his recesses from school.

“ I had a more unbending spirit, more decision of character, more pride, and I fear more resentment in my composition, than my brother. Young as I was, I had often witnessed, when she thought herself unheeded, my mother's plaintive moans ; had heard her breathe forth sighs of deep regret for my father's absence, and Lord Orpington's cruelty ; had seen her struggling against his persecutions with a debilitated frame, and a broken heart ! This scene my vivid imagination ever portrayed ; I still beheld her mild eyes, and beautiful countenance on the bed of death ; I saw the last breath tremble on her pale lips, after she had folded us to her emaciated bosom, and offered up a fervent supplication to her God, that her death might expiate her offences, and that her dereliction from duty might

not be visited upon her beloved children !

“ I felt therefore something very like horror at the thought of seeing, much less owing any obligation to this cruel Nobleman, who I firmly believed had occasioned me the loss of a mother I adored ; therefore dreading, nay almost hating, so strong at that time were my prejudices in his Lordship's disfavour, I flung my arms about the neck of Captain Colmore, entreating that he would not force me to leave him ; for I should die with sorrow if he insisted on my doing so, nor could I consent to accept the bounty of the man who had killed my parents ! If therefore he would provide me with a jacket and trowsers, and teach me how to become a sailor, I meant to fight for my country as he had done, and make my own fortune.

The worthy veteran strained me to his bosom, which throbbed with pleasure, swearing that I was a glorious

boy, one after his own heart; and I should not be torn from him against my inclinations by any Lord in the land, but should stay and share his mite; adding—“I find, Charles, that Britain is at the eve of a war; I will once more offer my services to bang the Monsieus, and you shall sail with me, and learn the road to glory from your old grandfather.”

“The result of this conversation settled the business; George departed for Orpington House, where he soon became a great favourite with his Lordship, who thought to make peace with his conscience for the cruelties he had practised towards his parents, by loading him with favours. I was never forgiven by him for refusing to accept the patronage of this proud Peer, whose person I could not love; for whose favours, feeling the repugnance I did, I never could have been grateful! He therefore forgot, when settling his worldly

worldly concerns, that such a being as your humble servant existed. George, to whom he gave a most liberal education, is now abroad on his travels; to him he bequeathed thirty thousand pounds.

“ Of myself I have little more to add; I became a tolerable proficient in nautical knowledge, under the tuition of my kind instructor. On the declaration of war he was made a Post Captain, and I permitted the honour of walking his quarter deck. When I had one year to serve of my time, before I could pass for a Lieutenant, it was my irremediable misfortune to see this dear relation, this affectionate guardian drop by my side! We were engaged with an enemy's ship of superior force, and my grandfather, ever foremost in the post of danger, as she struck to the valour of our brave Tars, and the shout of victory reached his ears, the last shot fired, struck his manly breast, and he
villrow M 5 fell

tell into my arms, who was fighting by his side, and expired without a groan!"

Here both the young sailors drew out their handkerchiefs, and felt no degradation in shedding a tear to the memory of this gallant commander.

"But a truce with grief," cried Nesbit; "it is the fate of heroes to be devoted to their country; he had served her long and faithfully, suffered, bled, and at last died for her. Peace to his *manes*!"

"After the demise of Captain Colmore, my uncle, the present Lord Orpington, sought me out, and offered me his interest in the profession I had chosen. We have often met, and he has ever shewn me much affectionate kindness, requesting that I would always make his house my home whenever I visited town. This I have done once or twice; but when I went last night to Cavendish Square, his Lordship being

being absent. Mrs. Stormer, who feels it her interest to have no spies on her actions, behaved with such vulgar insolence, that I vowed never to sleep another night under the roof where she called herself mistress.

“ This resolution I communicated to my uncle, a few hours since, who well knowing my spirit would not receive her affronts, and feeling his own imbecility to resent them, did not attempt to oppose my intentions. I have taken lodgings in Great Portland Street, where you, my dear Stuart, may also have a bed. As we are not rich, to be independent we must be provident; therefore one sitting room may serve us; it will be more comfortable and less expensive to you, than living at a noisy inn.—I have now brought down my insignificant life to the present moment, and have only to add to the account, my intention of visiting London is to

pass for a Lieutenant, and claim my
uncle's promise to use his interest with
the First Lord of the Admiralty to get
me a commission."

CHAP. XIV.

MR. STUART having thanked his
young friend for the recital of his history,
which raised in his bosom an enthusi-
astic admiration for the amiable nar-
rator, repaid his confidence by recount-
ing his own adventures since the time
he had wandered forth to see the world,
from his father's *wee house* by the
bourn-side, bringing down his tale to
the history of that morning; and con-
cluded

cluded by requesting Mr. Nesbit would give him some information, to enable him to develop the character of the charming sister of the detestable Mrs. Stormer; for whose fate he allowed that he was strongly interested.

Charles assured him that he had heard her highly spoken of both by his uncle and brother; but he had no personal knowledge of her, as they had never met. He had no doubt she was truly worthy of his heart, "which I clearly see, Andrew, you have already devoted to the fair Isabella, while you think you only feel commiseration for her unmerited sufferings; but you are not quite so disinterested as you suppose. Softer sensations actuate the throbbing inmate of your bosom at this moment, or I am much mistaken."

"Andrew answered that he believed he was a true prophet, and mentioned his intentions of seeing her in the morning. The friends having drank another

another bottle, adjourned to the Play-house, and from thence to their lodgings in Portland Street, where Andrew slept but little, reflecting on the fascinating Isabella; being doubtful of her acceptance of a poor fellow, who had neither family, friends, nor fortune to recommend him to her notice! It was true, she was not herself richer in those adventitious gifts, but she had been used lately to share the luxurious splendor lavished upon Mrs. Stormer, by her uxorious enamorado. He derived his hopes of success from the sentiments he had heard her avow, when urged by her abandoned sister to accept the offers of Lord Lorimore.

After breakfast the friends parted, with a promise to meet at dinner. Our hero, with a palpitating heart, took the road to Newington. A modest diffidence, ever attendant on a first passion, raised in his mind doubts and difficulties of a magnitude, that appeared to him insurmount-

insurmountable. [The, undaunting
Andrew was new to the usages of the
world; our readers will recollect it was his
début in the character of a lover. As yet
he had no opportunity of studying the
manners adopted by young men of the
new school; from whom he might have
imbibed those lessons practised by its
disciples, of unfeeling apathy, pert
familiarity, and bold assumption!

When arrived at Mrs. Hunt's, he was
shewn into a clean little parlour, and
received by the good woman with a
friendly welcome; whose garrulous in-
formation soon made him acquainted
with as much of the history of the two
sisters, as we have already recounted.
Unwilling to interrupt her, but ear-
nestly desirous to be introduced to
Isabella, his eyes were every moment
involuntarily directed to the door.
The absent inattention of her hearer, at
last struck the reciter with the fact,

and she observed, with much good humour—

“Well, I see how it is; you did not come to hear an old woman prattle, but I can’t help it; as my poor dear husband used to say, I am just for all the world like an alarum once let off; there’s no stopping me till I am run down!

“I will now go and fetch Isabella, who wished me to acquaint you who and what she was before you met, thinking you ought to be informed of the real situation of a person, you had shewn so kind a wish to serve.”

She now bustled away, and returned in a few moments, presenting her blushing friend. Our poor hero stammered out his wishes in a voice hardly articulate, the hope that she would excuse his interference, and permit him the honour of being her friend and protector. He was thanked by the lady in mellifluous tones, that revived his
spirits

spirits like the soft dews of a summer's evening, that cheer and re-animate the drooping flowers scorched by a torrid sun.

Mrs. Hunt was a very useful auxiliary to the modest pair, filling up the chasms of conversation with her own remarks on the causes and events that had brought the trio together; in which she insisted the interference of Providence might be plainly traced! She prognosticated future happiness to all parties. Thus while she was descanting on her favourite topic of predestinarianism, the young couple gained time to recollect their scattered ideas.

Mr. Stuart found courage to desire Miss Nelson would never think of returning to a sister, who had proved herself so unworthy of the title, but allow him to supply her present emergencies; and could he dare to hope that she would condescend to listen to his humble suit, and share a sailor's fortune,

fortune, he would offer her his hand, to protect her from care, poverty, and the future insults of Lord Lorimore, at the hazard of his existence.

Mrs. Hunt, who saw nothing in this but a safe and honourable asylum for her favourite, in being what she called the honest wife of a brave, worthy young man, urged her with much eagerness, and little ceremony, to give an immediate answer to his proposals. Of the doubts, tremors, and delicacy of lovers, Mrs. Hunt had not the least conception ! She only perceived a couple whose ages, families, fortunes, and future prospects of life were on an equality ; she could see no just cause or impediment why they should not be joined together in holy wedlock. She therefore continued to warmly plead the cause of Mr. Stuart, which thus pressed upon her, evidently hurt the ideas of propriety of the sensitive Isabella ; and she burst into a flood of tears,

tears, while every drop that fell from her soft blue eyes, intenerated the heart of her lover. He thanked Mrs. Hunt for her kind intentions in his favour, but entreated that Miss Nelson might be no further distressed on the subject; that if he was so unfortunate as to have offended her by his importunity, he should never forgive himself; adding, with a sigh—

“ If I am not the object of your choice, I must content myself with your friendship, while some more fortunate man is honoured with that love which I would cheerfully dedicate my whole life to obtain.”

Isabella, who admired his frank manners and honest heart, conceiving herself under an infinitude of obligations to him for his generous offer, could not bear to see him about to leave her, evidently mortified at what he must deem sullen ingratitude, therefore exerted her spirits to thus address him—

“ Sir,

“ Sir, I am grieved to perceive you are hurt, at what perhaps appears to you as childish petulance ! It is long since I felt happiness ; indeed it has been an alien to my breast ever since I quitted the respectable and peaceful habitation of the worthy Mr. Norman. My mind is therefore depressed and weak ; with my cause for recent sorrow you are acquainted, this will I hope extenuate my present behaviour : but to be unthankful for the interest you have expressed to serve me, would be inexcusable and the height of ingratitude, did I not properly estimate your ingenuous, disinterested offers. Trust me, Sir, my heart acknowledges your goodness ; but it would be an ill reward to allow you to encumber yourself with a wife, that from her unhappy connexions, could bring to your arms only ignominious poverty.”

“ Oh !

“ Oh ! speak not thus of yourself ! Do I not, by having fortunately overheard the conversation of yesterday, know more of your honour, worth, and rectitude, than years of formal courtship could have made me acquainted with ? Give me then, charming Isabella, a title to protect you from every care, every want, every insult, by making me your affectionate husband ! ”

“ What can I answer, Sir, to such open candour, such unmerited attachment, but that I shall try to tranquillize my agitated bosom, take a retrospective view of my heart, and when next we meet, I will, with that ingenuousness your generous conduct demands, acquaint you with the result of those reflections, and my consequent determination. ”

After having sat some time with the interesting Isabella, who each moment rose in his esteem, Andrew took his leave, well pleased that he had gained her promise that she would deliberate ;

for

for the Poet says, the woman that does so is *lost*—he flattered himself that it would be the means by which his fair one would be *won*!

When Mr. Stuart departed, he left his cause in good hands. Mrs. Hunt, with whom he was become a great favourite, called forth all her oratorical powers to aid his suit; using every persuasive argument to induce Isabella to accept his hand, thereby giving him a legal title to protect her from the artifices of her sister and Lord Lorimore. She pointed out, in forcible language, that she was poor and powerless; which would render her house no sanctuary against the daring atrocity of rank and consequence, when once the emissaries of her enemies had traced her to Newington.

Isabella felt the justice of all that her friendly monitor asserted, who in the advice she gave was actuated by no motive but her happiness; yet how
could

could she consent to avoid a present evil, by perhaps making herself wretched for life? For though Mr. Stuart appeared to have every good propensity that ennobles human nature, he was very young, had seen but little of the world; might he not change, on beholding a woman he liked better, and regret the hasty choice his zealous philanthropy had hurried him to adopt?"

To the plain understanding of Mrs. Hunt, all this refined delicacy of sentiment, causeless doubts, and unjust suspicions of the affections of Mr. Stuart, appeared perfectly absurd; and fearing Isabella would sport with what she called her good fortune, by refusing such an excellent young man, in her blunt honest manner she pointed out and descanted on her deserted situation; observing that after having been used to live in idleness and splendor, it was easy to talk about it, but she would find

find it hard returning to work as a common servant; that nobody took companions now but gouty dowagers, or disappointed spinsters, who want somebody to vent their ill humours upon; with whom she must expect to live like a toad under a harrow, could she even meet with such a situation, which was a thousand to one against her: for it was a commodity with which the London market was overstocked, as the innumerable advertisements that daily appeared might convince her—the fabrication of foolish young bodies, who prefer the irksomeness of dependance on querulous infirmity, or the irritating insolence of neglected virginity, to the name of honest servitude; for which folly she could hardly yield them the commiseration, that a life passed in such unceasing misery would otherwise create!

Isabella

Isabella having patiently heard all that her well-meaning friend had to offer on the subject, promised to weigh well her advice, before she gave a definitive answer to Mr. Stuart. To escape from the garrulity of her hostess, and obtain an hour of calm reflexion, she retired to the humble attic appropriated to her use; where to gain rest and silence, throwing herself on the pallet, she revolved the vicissitudes of her past life, the misery of her present situation; and shuddered with horror at the dreary, unprotected, comfortless prospect that the future presented to her affrighted imagination, as drawn forth by Mrs. Hunt in terrible array!

Happily this persecuted young creature had not been initiated into the problematical system of the new philosophy; no doubting scepticism, nor atheistical tenets, robbed her bosom of a firm reliance on the omnipotent Creator of the Universe, who has said—"The sighings of a contrite heart

"I will not despise."—She had been early grounded in a knowledge of that religion that inculcates faith, hope, and charity; documents of so much importance to her happiness, were instilled into her mind by the pious protector of her youth. He was himself a living example of that meek sufferance, patient humility, persevering rectitude, and rigid morality under worldly inflictions, that he so earnestly exhorted his flock to follow.

Isabella arose, and, throwing herself on her knees, addressed her Almighty Father in a fervent ejaculation, that she might be enabled to act properly in her present trying situation. After this appeal she found her mind tranquilized, was enabled to reflect on Mr. Stuart's offers, and to ask her heart if it was conscious of a predilection in his favour, that could ensure his happiness who was so desirous to contribute to her's. The result of those deliberations was

was that she felt friendship, esteem, and gratitude for his disinterested, generous conduct; but she experienced no signs of love, such as it is described in modern Novels and Romances; a frantic desolating passion, that impels its devoted victims to outrage all order, rend asunder the links that unite society, set at nought all laws divine and human, and when opposed or disappointed, impetuously rush into eternity with all their sins upon their heads!

Isabella had ever trembled at the idea of admitting to her gentle bosom so despotic a tyrant; but having never experienced his power, she flattered herself she never should! On this supposition she came to the resolution, that if Mr. Stuart, on a further acquaintance, appeared as worthy in her eyes as he then did, she would consent to unite her fate with our Northern Wanderer.

END OF VOL. I.